

THE
BANNER
OF
Corah, Dathan, and Abiram,
DISPLAY'D;
And Their
SIN
DISCOVER'D:
In Several
SERMONS,
Preach'd at Bristol.

By JOHN MOORE, Curate of
Bristolington; and Queen-Charlton, in
the Diocess of Bath and Wells.

*Concordiâ, parva crescunt
Discordiâ, Magnâ dilabuntur.*

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JOSEPHUS
TO THE
READER.

C*Hore, (a Man Noble in Birth,*
and famous for his *Wealth a-*
mongst the Hebrews ; en-
dued with a certain kind of *Popu-*
lar Eloquence) seeing *Moses* placed in
the highest Estate of *Dignity*, was sore
troubled and oppressed with *Envy* : For
altho' he was of the same *Tribe*, and
Kindred, yet thought he it a great *In-*
dignity in himself, to be held his *Inferior* ;
being both more enabled in *Riches*,
and nothing *Inferior* in *Parentage* ; for
which Cause he began to *Mutiny* and
Murmur amongst the *Levites*, (which
were of the same *Tribe* with him, and
his *Kinsmen*) telling them (in *Vehe-*
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ment Discourse (That it was not to be suffered, nor permitted, that Moses, under a pretence of certain Divinity, should by Ambitious Policie, (to other Mens Prejudice) only Study his own Glory: shewing them how of late, without all Law and Right, he had given the Priest-hood, to his Brother Aaron, and Distributed other Dignities at his own Pleasure, like a King, without Allowance and Approbation of the People.

That this Injury done by him, was not to be endured, by Reason, that he so covertly had insinuated himself into the Government, that before he might be espied, the People should be brought under Servitude. For he that knoweth himself to be worthy of a Government, striveth to obtain the same but by kind Persuasions, and Consent of the People; and not by Force, and Violence: But they that desire by good means to attain thereunto,

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unto, do notwithstanding abstain from force, least they should loose the *Opinion* of their *Goodness* and *Honesty*, yet endeavour they, by *Malitious Subtilities* to attain thereunto.

That it concerned the *Common-Wealth*, to Extinguish, and Root out the subtil *Insinuations* of such Men, least of private, they should at last grow publick Enemies. For what Reason, said he, can *Moses* yeild, why he hath bestowed the Priest-hood on *Aaron*, and his Sons? For if that God had Decreed, that this Honour should have been bestowed on one of the *Tribe* of *Levi*, there were more Reason that I should have it; who am of the same *Kindred* with *Moses*, and who surpass him, both in Riches, and Age.

And if this Honour appertained to the most Antient of the *Tribes*, that those of *Reubens* Loyns, ought
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by right to enjoy it, namely *Dathan* and *Abiram*, and *Phalal*, who are the most Ancient of that *Tribe*, and the most powerful in *Riches*.

These things spake *Chore*, under pretence, and colour of the *Weal* of the *Common-Wealth*; (that is, for the good of the People) but in effect only to raise a *Tumult* amongst the *Multitude*, and Intrude into the Office of the *High Priest*.

This *Discourse* of his, passing by little and little, from Ear to Ear, amongst the *Multitude*, and Multiplied by the *Envious*, and such as Maligned *Aaron*, at last brought the whole *Tribes* into a *Mutiny*; so that *Two Hundred and Fifty* of the chiefest Nobles, grew at length to be Partakers of *Chores* Conspiracy; and all of these inforce them.

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themselves to take away the *Priesthood* from *Moses's* Brother, and to *Transfer* it to him.

The People likewise were in such sort Incensed, as that they sought to stone *Moses*, and ran all of them by confused heaps, with noise and uprore, crying out before the *Tabernacle* of God, *That the Tyrant was to be cut off, and the People delivered from Thraldom.* Who under pretence of Religion, had insupportable Thraldom imposed upon them, for if it had been God, that had chosen him, (i. e. *Aaron*) to be *High Priest*; he would have preferred such a one to the *Dignity* who had been worthy, and would not have departed to those who were far inferiour to others, that if he had *Decreed* to Confer it on *Aaron*, he had remitted the Commission of his *Election* to the People? and

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not left the disposing of it to his Brother.

Moses, who long before that time, had perceived *Chores* Treacherous Slander, and saw the People very sore Incensed, was notwithstanding, nothing at all abashed thereat; but being resolved in his Conscience, that he had Governed the State uprightly; and well assured that his Brother obtained the *Priest-Hood* not by his favour, but by God's Election; he came into the Congregation, where he uttered not one word against the People; but addressing himself unto *Chore*, he Expostulated with him, and Accused him, in as much as was for him possible, being (besides his other Qualities) Fashioned, and Compos'd by Nature, Eloquently, to speak in publick Assemblies.

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I think, (saith he) Chore, that both thou, and every one of those, (pointing with his Finger at the Two Hundred and Fifty Men of his Faction) are worthy of Honour : Yea, I Contemn not the rest of this Assembly, altho' they are not to be compared with you in Riches, and other Endowments. For neither doth Aaron therefore possess the Priest-Hood, because he is Richer, for thou hast more ample Possessions than either of us, neither because he is more Noble, for God hath equally Imparted the same unto us all, having given us one and the same Grandfather : Neither have I been moved thereunto by Brotherly Affection, to bestow it on him, which was due to others : For had I not Respected Gods Right, in Disposing of this ; I had not forgotten my self, to further and prefer another, since there is no Man more near

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my self, than my self, or whom I had rather wish well to, than my self: For what Wisdom had it been in me, to expose my self to those Dangers, which they incur, who make breach of Laws, to suffer another Man to Reap Fruit of my Impiety.

But God forbid, that my Conscience should be stained with any such Sin; neither were the Fruit mine also, would God leave it unpunished, neither in me who should Contemn him, neither in you, for that ye were not Ignorant of that ye ought to do, and of that which was Gracefull in his Sight.

He himself it is, that hath chosen the High-Priest, and by this means hath acquitted me of that Accusation, that in this Respect, might be Objected against me; for al-
tho

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tho' *Aaron* hath obtained this *Degree*, (not by my Favour, but by Gods own Appointment) yet notwithstanding, he Referreth and Remitteth the Matter to the publick Disposition, and Order of you all; neither requireth he any *Prerogative*, for that he hath Exercised the Charge already; or for that at this present it is Granted him to intermeddle with the same; but esteemeth it to be the greatest Happiness that may befall him, to see your *Mutinies*, and *Seditions* cease. For neither have we injured Gods Will, in that, we also wish your *Assent*, and *Allowance*; but that, which of his own Accord he hath given, it was not Lawful to refuse, with a safe Conscience. As reciprocally it is a thing most reasonable, that they which receive

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ceive it, should always enjoy it, since God himself had given them both the Assurance and Confirmation.

God therefore, will once more Determine, who amongst you shall be chosen to Offer *Sacrifice* unto him, and to take charge of those things which appertain to *Piety*; for it is a most Absurd Matter, that *Chore*, should have Power to desire a Dignity, and that God should be deprived of that Authority, to dispose the same, as best liked him.

Cease therefore, to Mutiny amongst your selves, and to be troubled, upon these Occasions, and let every one of you that desire the *Priest-Hood*, to Morrow bring each of you his *Censer*, with Perfume and Fire from his House. But thou, O
Chore,

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Chore, give place unto God, and expect his Election, neither Arrogate to thy Self, a greater Authority than God hath, but come thou also amongst the rest of thy Competitors in this Honour, to hear his Judgment, neither see I cause, why, *Aaron*, should not be there also present, to be Judged with thee, in that hitherto, he hath Virtuously, and Uprightly behaved himself in that Office,, and is likewise of the same *Tribe*, and *Race*, that thou art off.

Ye shall likewise offer *Incense* in the Presence of all the People, and when the Perfume, shall be past, let him, whose *Sacrifice* shall be most Acceptable in Gods sight, be declared, and published for the *High-Priest*, so shall I be acquit of that Slander, which is so wrongfully urged against me; whereby, I am charged
ged

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ged upon my own particular Grace and Favour, to have bestowed the Office of the *Priest-Hood* on my Brother.

After that *Moses* had spoken in this manner, the People gave over Murmuring, and forbear suspecting *Moses*, allowing in themselves, all that which had been spoken, as being profitable for the *Common-Wealth*, so that hereupon, they dismissed the Assembly.

The next Day, the People reassembled themselves together, to assist the *Sacrifice*, and to hear the Strife decided amongst the Competitors; neither was this Assembly without Tumult; for the whole Multitude were in suspence, in expectation of the Event, and some of them were desirous that *Moses* might be Convicted of Deceit: But such as were
of

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of the wiser sort amongst them, desired an end of the Sedition; for they feared least the *Common-Wealth* should be utterly ruined, if the Tumult should proceed any further; the Multitude, likewise being desirous of *Novelties*, and prone to speak evil of their Magistrates, were diversly disposed upon every Occurrent. *Moses*, also sent his Servants, to *Dathan* and *Abiram*, to Summon them to Appear (according to the *Covenant* and *Accord*) to attend the Issue of the *Sacrifice*; but their Answer was, that they would not Obey him, nor that they would any longer permit that *Moses* by his subtil and sinister Devices, should signorize over the People.

Which, when *Moses* understood, he took divers of the Elders amongst the People with him; and being no ways moved with the Contumacy
of

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of *Dathan*, he came unto him (being willingly Attended by those who were drawn to Accompany him.)

Now when *Dathan* and his Friends, understood that *Moses*, with the Nobles came unto them, both they, their Wives and Children Assembled themselves before the Tabernacle, expecting that which might ensue.

They likewise came Guarded with their Servants, who were Armed to Oppose themselves against *Moses*, if so be he should offer them any Violence. But no sooner drew he near unto them, but that lifting up his Hands towards Heaven, he Cryed out with a loud Voice, in the hearing of the whole Multitude; and Prayed after this manner.

O God!

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O God! (said he) thou Lord over all that which either Heaven, Earth, or Sea containeth; thou art a sufficient Witness with me of all my Actions, for that I have managed all things by thy Will: And thou art he, who hast given me Power to Execute my purposes: Thou that always in Commiseration of the Hebrews, hast been my perpetual Help and Assistance. Hear this my Prayer, for nothing that is either done or thought can be hidden from thee; for which Cause, I hope, thou wilt not Disdain to Testifie and Justifie the Truth; and manifest the Ingratitude of these Men.

Thou dost exactly know the Antiquity of my Race; now also Testifie the Truth for me, in those things which these Men (altho' they know the contrary) are not ashamed to impute unto me, at such time as I led a Peaceable Life. And
that

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that by thy Council, I forsook the Possession of my Goods, and the Fruition of my Peace, to Engage my self in these Miseries, which I have suffered for these Men.

And first of all, for their Liberty, and now likewise, for their Safety, I have readily undertaken grievous Travels; now therefore, since I am grown into Suspicion amongst these Men, who by my Care, and Providence, have escaped so many Mischiefs, and Miseries. Thou that appearedst unto me in that Fire on the Mountain of Sinai, and Vouchsafest to speak unto me and to Confirm me by the sight of Miracles, that in thy Name sentst me a Messenger into Egypt, and hast given me Means to escape their Servitude. And hast made Pharaoh's power and Armies inferior to my Fortunes,

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Fortunes, that when we were ignorant of our Ways; thou gavest a Passage through the Sea, in whose Bottom and Womb the *Egyptians* were Drowned; that gavest us Arms when we were un-weaponed; that madest the bitter Waters Savory, and fit to be drank of; and in our scarcity of Water, forced Drink for us out of the Bowels of the hard Rock, when we found no Meat on the Land, thou did send it us from the Sea. Moreover, as a thing never hard of before, afforded us Meat from Heaven, and hast Established our State with *Laws* and *Customs*. Be thou, O Lord, my Judge in all things, and my Impartial Witness, that I have neither bin Corrupted by any Bribe, of any Particular Hebrew, to favour Injustice, nor that I have suffer-

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ed a Poor Man in his just Cause, to loose his Right against a Rich Adversary.

And now having Administred the *Common-Wealth*, with all Sincerity, I am called in Question for a *Crime*, whereof I am altogether Guiltless. as if I had bestowed the *Priest-Hood* on my Brother, for private Affection, and not for thy Command sake: Make it known that all things are disposed of by thy Providence, and that nothing is brought to Effect by Casualty, but by thy special *Ordinance*, and to Express, that thou hast care of the *Hebrews*, Testify the same, by thy just Punishment Inflicted on *Dathan* and *Abiram*, who Accuse thee to be Insensible, and boast that thou art Circumvented by my Subtilies: But thou shalt make thy Revenge more
notorious

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notorious against the unbridled De-
tracters of thy Glory, if they Perish
after no common Manner, least
any Man should suspect that they
suffer nothing Inhumane. But let
the Earth, which they unworthily
tread on, open it self, and swallow
them up, both with their Facul-
ties and Families.

By this means, both thy Power
will manifestly appear unto all
Men, and thou shalt leave an Ex-
ample to Posterity, that no Man
hereafter shall dare to think other
wise of thy Majesty, then becometh
him, and my Ministry shall be ap-
proved to proceed from thy Di-
rection: But if those Crimes be
truly urged which are Inforced a-
gainst me, then let the Curses Re-
turn and light on my own Head,
and let those whom I have Cursed,

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live in safety; and thus exacting a Punishment from those that disturb thy People, keep the rest of the Multitude in Peace, Concord, and Observation of thy Commandments, secure and void of that Punishment, which is due unto wicked Men; for that it is contrary to thy Justice, that the Innocent Multitude of the *Israelites*, should answer their misdeeds, and suffer their Punishments.

Whilest he spake these Words; and intermixed them with Tears, the Earth instantly trembled, and shaking began to remove, (after such a manner, as when by the Violence of the Wind a great Bellow of the Sea floteth and Waltereth) hereat were all the People amazed; but after that, a horrible and shattering noise was made about

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bout their Tents, and the Earth opened and swallowed them up, both them and all that which they esteemed dear, which was after a manner so exterminated, as nothing remained of theirs to be beheld; where upon. in a Moment, the Earth closed again, and the vast gaping was fast shut, so as there appeared not any sight of that which had happened. Thus perished they all, leaving behind them an example of Gods Power, and Judgments.

And this Accident, was the more miserable, in that there was not any one of their Kinsfolk and Allies that had Compassion on them; so that all the People whatsoever, forgetting these things that were past, did allow Gods Justice with Joyful Acclamations, esteeming them

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them unworthy to be bemoaned ; but to be beheld as the Plague and Perverters of the People.

After that *Dathan*, with his Family was extinguished, *Moses* Assembled all those that contended for the *Priest-Hood*, committing again the Election of the *Priest-Hood* unto God, that the Estate thereof should be Confirmed to him, whose *Sacrifice* should be most acceptable in God's sight, for which cause the Two Hundred, and Fifty Men Assembled themselves, who were both Honoured for the Vertue of their *Ancesters*, and for their own Abilities, far greater than theirs ; with those also stood *Aaron*, and *Chore*, and all of them Offered with their *Censers* before the *Tabernacle*, with *Perfumes*, such as they brought with them, when so great a Fire shone

as

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as neither the like was ever kindled by Mans Hand, nor usually breaketh from the Bowels of the burning Earth, nor was ever quickened in the Woods in the *Summer-time*, by a Southern Breeze. But such a one as seemed to be kindled in Heaven; most brightsom, and flaming : By force and Power whereof those Two Hundred, and Fifty Men, (together with *Chore*) were so Consumed, that there scarce appeared any Relicks of their Carcases, only *Aaron* remained untouched, to the end it might appear that this Fire came from Heaven.

These things thus brought to pass, *Moses*, (intending to leave a perpetual Memory to Posterity, of that Punishment) to the end they should not be ignorant of it, Com-
manded

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manded *Eleazer*, the Son of *Aaron*,
to Consecrate their *Censers* affixed
to the Brazen Altar, that by Rea-
son of this *Monument*, all Men
might be terrified, who think that
the *Divine Power* can be Circum-
vented by Humane Policy.

T H E

T H E
B A N N E R
O F

*Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, Display'd,
and their SIN Discover'd: In se-
veral SERMONS, Preach'd at
BRISTOLL.*

Numbers, xvi. xxiii, xxiv, xxv, xxvi.
*And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak
unto the Congregation of Israel, saying, Get you
up from about the Tabernacle of Corah, Da-
than, and Abiram. And Moses rose up,
and went unto Dathan, and Abiram; and
the Elders of Israel followed him. And he
spake unto the Congregation, saying, Depart, I
pray you, from the Tents of these wicked Men,
and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be Consum-
ed in all their Sins.*

Israel, was once Gods choicest Jewel,
snatch'd forth of the Fire of sore Afflic-
tion. A People, wonderfully Redeemed
with a Mighty Hand, and Stretched out
Arm of Heavenly Power, from cruel and bit-
ter Bondage.

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A People, thorowly Taught and Instructed, in the Sacred *Oracles* of God, and purest of his ways.

A People, fed with Bread from Heaven ; for Man did eat Angels Food.

A People, that had God and Christ for their Guide and Conduct, and Angels, and the best of Men for their Guards and Governors : A People, that wanted no Mercy, nor Blessing, that either Heaven or Earth could afford.

And yet, from amongst this People, did such a Root of Bitterness spring up, and such a deadly Sin, a deadly Sin appear'd, which did more highly provoke the Lord to Anger, and more hotly kindle the Fire of his Jealousie and wrathfull Indignation, than either the Sin of *Sodom*, or the Wickedness of *Egypt*.

For when the Lord sent his Angels to destroy *Sodom*, for their Sins of Pride, and fulness of Bread, Idleness, and hard Heartedness to the Poor, he meekly heard *Abrahams* Petition for them, and patiently suffered him to Pray and Interceed for them, as long, as in reason he could desire. O Let not the Lord be Angry, (saith he) and I will speak but this once, Peradventure, there shall be Ten (that is. Ten Righteous Persons) found there, and the Lord said, I will not destroy it for Ten sake, Gen. 18. 32.

And

And before he Executed his Judgments upon Egypt, for their unjust Dealings, and exercise of Cruelty upon this very selfsame People in my Text, he treated with Pharaoh, from day to day, by Moses and Aaron, with Signs and Wonders, to try if he would soften his hard Heart towards them.

But, for the Sin of these, his lately, and for a long time, beloved People, he was so deeply incensed against them, that he hastily, and suddenly commanded Moses and Aaron to separate themselves from them, that he might Consume them in a Moment. ver. 21.

The first thing then, before I come to the Words of my Text, must be to enquire what their Sin was, that so we may the more readily and easily understand the Doctrine we are to learn from thence.

Their Sin and Wickedness under the cloak and colour of Holiness, is drawn up in a brief Remonstrance, in ver. 3, in these Words:

They gathered themselves together against Moses, and against Aaron, and said unto them, ye take too much upon you, seeing all the Congregation are Holy every one of them, and the Lord is amongst them: wherefore then lift ye up your selves above the Congregation of the Lord.

In which bold Remonstrance of theirs, there are four Articles, which they exhibited in

foro in open Court, two directly against *Moses* and *Aaron*, one pretendedly for God, and the other point blank for themselves.

1. In the *First*, they draw up a charge against *Moses* and *Aaron*, for exceeding the Bound: of their Commission, *Ye take too much upon you, ye do more than you can justify, more than ye have Warrant from God to do.* This Lordliness of yours, is not *fure Divino*: we know our Duty to God without your Lordly teaching of us.

Hence it was that *Moses* told them *ver. 28.* *Hereby shall ye know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these Works; for I have not done them of my own Mind.*

2. The second *Article*, contains a Plea for their own Holiness, to Justifie the Innocency of their Enterprize, and to let all *Israel* know, that their Proceedings were from Religious Principles, that Religion is the Center of all that they go about to compass; seeing all the Congregation are Holy, they will not allow one prophane Person to be amongst them: If we were a wicked and prophane People ye might have some colour.

3. In the third *Article*, they take God to witness that their Intents were Just and Honest, that they thought nor meant any Harm nor Evil to any one, and avouch God to be the

Primum

Primum Mobile of their Intents and Purposes, as if they had said, *be it known unto you Moses and Aaron, and let all Israel take notice, that what we do, proceeds not from our selves, we are moved of God to do it, and that it is a Revelation of the Mind and Will of God, the Lord is amongst us.*

4. The fourth Article, contains a seemingly Rational Argument, for the Confirmation of the former three. Wherefore then, mark that word, *Wherefore then lift ye up your selves above the Congregation of the Lord?*

Are not we the Congregation and People of the Lord? Are not we the only holy People of an holy God? Have not we the presence of the Almighty God amongst us? What Reason have you then, *to lift up your selves above us?* Can ye teach us better than the Lord, who is in us? for so one *Latin Translation* reads the Text *Omnis multitudo Sanctorum est, et in ipsis est Dominus*, the People are all Holy, and the Lord is in them. Why do ye then go about to prescribe us a way, or tye us up to a Form of Worshipping God.

This was the substance of their Charge against their faithful Rulers.

Their Prolocutors were *Corah*, a self-wil'd Levite, and *Dathan* and *Abiram*, two unstable Reubenites, accompany'd with the Aid and

Assistance of 250 Chieftains, the boldest and and most confident, that they could pick or chuse in the Warlike Camp of *Israel*.

Now, who could presently think or imagine, that under these Words, we are all Holy, and the Lord is amongst us, there should lie so great a Sin, as to provoke a Gracious and Merciful God to destroy miraculously those very People, whom not many Years before he had miraculously deliver'd from Opression and Slavery.

Who would have thought that this outside clean Cup, and Platter, had been inwardly filled with Ravening and Wickedness? That those white Painted Sepulchres had been full of dead Mens Bones and Rottenness. Who would have imagined, that these Mens Principles, would have digged so many Graves for the *Israelites* Carcases, as afterwards they did? That such Confusions and Disorders, would have followed the Heels of these Men, professing extraordinary Holyness and Righteousness?

Our work then at this time, will be to get the true and real Knowledge of these Mens Sin; that knowing it, we may the more resolutely detest and abhor it, and thence shun and avoid them.

And

And this way we must go to work, even to enquire of the Oracles of God, what they were, in a three-fold respect.

1. What they were in their Generation and Tribe.

2. In their Qualifications, or Parts.

3. In their Estimation, or Credit, and that

1. With God.

2. With the People.

1. For their Generation, or Tribe, we read, that they were of the two Tribes of *Reuben* and *Levi*, as the first *ver.* of the *chap.* plainly shews in these words, *Now Corah, the Son of Izhar, the Son of Kohah, the Son of Levi, and Dathan, and Abiram, the Sons of Eliab, and On, the Son of Peleth, Sons of Reuben, took Men.*

Of which two Tribes, these two things are Recorded, that they were Unstable, and Self-will'd, and by no worse a Man, than their own Father : And this upon his Death-bed too ; two infamous Blots, in both their Escutcheons ; the Records are written in *Gen. 49.* the Blot, upon *Reubens* Escutcheon at *ver. 3.* *Reuben, thou art my First-born, my Might, and the beginning of my Strength, the excellency of Dignity, and the excellency of Power, Unstable as Water, a foul Blot, in a fair Escutcheon.*

The Blot in *Levi's* Escutcheon, at ver. 5, 6.
*Simeon, and Levi, are Brethren, Instruments of
 Cruelty are in their Habitations*

*O my Soul, come not thou into their Secret, unto
 their Assembly, mine Honor, be not thou united:
 For in their Anger they Slew a Man, and in their
 Self-will, they digged down a Wall.*

In their Self-will, there is the Blot in *Levi's*
 Escutcheon.

Now if we joyn the Blots in both their
 Escutcheons together, and compare them
 with these Mens Words, and Actions, in my
 Text, we may safely conclude the truth of
 that Proverb,

Natura sequitur Semina quisque suæ.

And take this for a *Maxim* in Divinity,
 That Instability of Heart, to walk with God
 in his antient ways, and Self-will'dness of
 Spirit, to prefer a private Error in Judgment,
 before the publick Peace and welfare of the
 Church: Is the grand Anvil, upon which
 the Devil hath forged all his Machination of
 Heresy, and Scisme, to the Continual distur-
 bance of the Church, in all Ages of the
 World.

2. In the next place, we will consider
 them in their Qualifications and Endow-
 ments, and this to

1. Negatively.

2. Positively.

Nega-

1. Negatively, they were not the Ignorant sort, altho' Thousands of those were seduced by their Leaders, not yet of the lowest, basest, and meanest among them; altho' Thousands of these were ready to Aid and Assist them in their Enterprize, nor were they openly Prophane, or Debauch'd Persons, altho' such (had there been any such in *Israel*) would easily have become Sticklers to these Mens Principles.

2. But Positively, for their Qualifications, they were Men of excellent Gifts and Parts, for there were many *Levites* amongst them; and many of good Rank and Quality. *Reubenites* of the Tribe of *Jacobs* First-born; and without all Peradventure, Stout Men of their Hands too, if need required. And this is clear from what is Recorded, in *ver. 2.* *And they (i. e. Corah, and his Confederates) rose up before Moses, with certain of the Children of Israel, Two Hundred and Fifty Princes of the Assembly, famous in the Congregation, Men of Renown.*

The Fame of these Men spread far and near throughout all *Israel*; sparkling in the Firmament of the Church, like blazing Stars, talkt of in every Tent, especially of these Two Tribes. Thus did their Renown ring in the Ears of unsteadfast and backsliding *Israel*.

Famous

Famous and Renowned they were, for what? Not for any open or visible Sin or Wickedness; for the Iniquity of these Men, was a Mysterious Riddle to many honest Hearted Israelites.

Latet anguis in Herba.

The green Herbs of their admirable Knowledge, and seeming Holiness, did so flourish and spread it self in the sight of all the Redeemed Tribes of *Israel*, that they could not see, nor perceive the Serpent at the Root.

Israel, was Gods chosen People, above all Nations upon the face of the Earth; and these Men the choicest of all *Israel* *Psal.* 78. 31.

Having now considered them in their Generations, and Qualifications, it remains, that we consider them in their Estimation; in what Esteem they were both with God, and the People.

And 1. That they were once in high Esteem with God, *Moses* himself acknowledgeth it in *ver.* 8, 9. And *Moses* said unto *Corah*, Hear, I pray you, ye Sons of *Levi*: Seemeth it a small thing to you, that the God of *Israel*, hath separated you from all *Israel*, to bring you near to himself, to do the Service of the Tabernacle, and to stand before the Congregation, to Minister unto them. And that they were in great

great Credit and Esteem with the People; we have their own words for it, in ver. 41.

But on the Morrow, all the Congregation of Israel, Murmured against Moses and against Aaron, Saying ye have Killed the People of the Lord. How strong were the delusions of these Men? When notwithstanding the visible and unheard of judgments, which the Lord Plagued them with. In causing the Earth to open her Mouth, and swallow up some of them; and Fire from Heaven to consume the rest. Yet on the Morrow, whilst these things were fresh in their sight and memory, they could tell *Moses and Aaron*, with murmuring Words, that they were guilty of Murder, in the the Death of these Men, *Ye have Killed the People of the Lord.*

Ye have not only lifted up you selves, and made your selves Lords over Gods Heritage, but Treacherously, and Cruelly, Murdered the Saints, and People of God.

Thus did they by way of Recrimination, charge the Meekest, and Faithfullest Man upon the face of the Earth, with the Guilt of the greatest Wickedness, that could possibly be Committed. And doubtless, had they had an Armed Power, answerable to their Envious and Arrogant Hearts, they would have Erected a *Sanedrim* of their own, and

and Arraigned him as Guilty of the Death of all the *Israelites*, that dyed for their Wickedness, in the Wilderness, since the Day that they came up out of the Land of *Egypt*, till then. Just so, the worst of Hellish Villanes, except *Judas*, and *Julian* the Apostates, Arraigned the best of Kings, (Jesus Christ excepted) King *Charles* the First: I mean, as Guilty of all that Blood, that had been shed in the three Kingdoms of *England*, *Ireland*, and *Scotland*, in the time of those unnatural and Bloody Wars, continued for so many dreadful Years of that Pious Prince's Raign.

And here I could willingly make a Digression from my matter in hand, by saying, That I could wish that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes, Fountains of Tears, that I might Weep Day and Night; not only for the Sins of mine own unstable Heart, but for the ensuing Miseries, which without speedy and unfeigned Repentance, will certainly fall upon the Church of God in these Kingdoms; the Lord hath shak'd his Rod at us, for several Years past, nor hath he yet laid it aside, for the noise of it, is still in our Ears, and we seem to take little or no notice of it, as if we did either stop our Ears at it, and so refuse to hear it, or by a careless slighting of it, make a puff at it, or were wholly void of Sence and Reason

Reason, not to understand the meaning of it; like those whom the Prophet *Isaiab* exclaim'd against, *chap. 1. ver. 3. The Ox knoweth his owner, and the Ass, his Masters Crib; but Israel doth not know, my People doth not consider.*

I must confess, it is very sad to think that when God condescends to speak to poor Mortal Creatures in so many different ways, as he hath done to the People of these Kingdoms; and so few of us understand his meaning in any of them.

That we should be so destitute of Evangelical Wisdom, that we should neither Hear nor See, nor Taste nor Feel God in the various Dispensations of his Providences, but continue in a senseless, stupid, dull frame of Spirit, as if we resolved to walk contrary to his Providences, be they what they will. But least a larger Digression should divert your Thoughts from the Subject I am discoursing of, I will immediately return to them where I left them, and shew you more of their Sin and Wickedness; for so strangely and so strongly, were these *Israelites* ensnared, and bound with the Cords and Chains of this spiritual Delusion, and so cheated by the seeming Holyness of these eminent and famous Men, that they adventur'd to Canonize them for Saints, after they were dead, altho' they died Impenitent Rebels.

And

And a probable Reason why they had such an esteem for them after they were dead, was either because the Two Hundred and Fifty Men, Confederates with *Corah*, Justified their doings to the Face of *Moses*, in the Tabernacle of the Lord, and in the presence of God, and died with Censurs in their Hands and Incense burning thereon.

Or else it was because they intended to play over again the same Game that their Brethren had lost, and so prove a second Brood of Religious Rebels.

That this is more then probable, the words in *ver. 42.* do plainly demonstrate, for do but mark the Words, *And it came to pass when the Congregation was gathered against Moses, and against Aaron, that they looked toward the Tabernacle of the Congregation; and behold the Cloud covered it, and the Glory of the Lord appeared.*

Hence it is very evident, that these Chips of the old Block, were resolved to revive the good old Cause of their deceased Friends, and had not the Lord again Graciously preserved his Church, this last Seditious Commotion, might have been worie than the former.

For *Corah* and his Company, did but charge *Moses* and *Aaron* with the Sin of self-promotion. : But these Off-spring of theirs, charge them with the shedding of Innocent Blood,
even

even the Blood of the People of the Lord ; and so might pretend that God had put into their Hand the Sword of Vengeance for Innocent Blood.

These things being well weighed and considered, without doubt, this was the Root and Rise of their Sin.

The high conceit, which they had of their own Knowledge and Holyness, together with the Applause and Estimation which they had with the People, had so lifted them up with Pride, that they thought themselves so full of Knowledge, and so Holy, and in both so perfect, that their Consciences would not suffer them to live any longer in obedience to a written Law, that is, to such a Law, or to such Rules and Orders as should be delivered to them by any other hand then their own.

And this is clear, if we consider the time of their publick discovering of it ; and we shall find that it was immediately upon *Mose's* pressing them to a strickt Observation of an harmless Ceremony for Decency, and Order, to be placed upon the border of their Vestments.

The Form of it, and the Orders of God for it, is written in the 4 last ver. of the foregoing chap. the words are these,

And

*And the Lord Spake unto Moses, saying,
 Speak unto the Children of Israel, and bid
 them that they make them Fringes in the Borders
 of their Garments, throughout their Generations,
 and that they put upon the Fringe of the Borders a
 Ribband of blue*

*And it shall be unto you for a Fringe, that ye
 may look upon it, and remember all the Command-
 ments of the Lord, and do them: And that ye seek
 not after your own Heart, and your own Eyes, after
 which you use to go a Whoring.*

*That ye may remember and do all my Command-
 ments, and be Holy unto your God.*

*I am the Lord your God, which brought you out
 of the Land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the
 Lord your God.*

Which Command, was no sooner delivered
 by Moses, but presently Corah and his Con-
 federates, stood up and told him to his Face,
 That he took too much upon him, to order
 them what to do.

These things have at last brought me
 through a Wilderness of troubled thoughts
 home to my Text, which contains four parts.

1. A Message from God to Israel, by Moses
 and Aaron, ver. 23. 24

2. The Message it self, which was both
 short and smart, and we may observe, that as
 these Mens Remonstrance was short and bit-

ter, so Gods Answer to it in this Message, is shorter and smarter, *Get you up from about the Tabernacle of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram.*

3. *Moses, the Messenger's Expedition to deliver it: And Moses rose up, and went unto Dathan, and Abiram.* He that had an Ear always ready to hear, had an Heart always ready to obey. If God bid *Moses* rise, he is ready to go: if God bids him go, he runs. so the *Psalmist*.

I made hast, and prolonged not the time to keep thy Commandments. Psal. 119. 60.

And again, *I will run the way of thy Commandments, when thou hast set my Heart at Liberty.* ver. 32.

4. *Moses's Love to, and care for the rest, whom he thought not past recovery, delivering his Message to them in such a frame of Spirit, as he thought most likely to prevail with them, if any thing would, in begging and intreating them; Depart, I pray you, from the Tents of these wicked Men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be Consumed in all their Sins.*

Now from these parts of the *Text*, and from what hath been spoken as previous to it. I shall deliver these six Propositions, or Points of Doctrine.

C

1. That

1. That it is dangerous and unsafe for *Christians* to Congregate themselves with such a People, (tho' never so full of Knowledge and seeming Holyness) that do deny *Conformity* to such *Laws* and *Ordinances*, as God hath deliver'd to them, by the Hands of faithfull Governors.

2. That God will reject and disown the Knowledge and Holiness of such a People.

3. That the Sin of such *Nonconformity*, doth exceedingly provoke the Lord to Anger, and stir up the Fire of his Jealousie.

4. That a People under such Delusions, may think themselves Holy and Righteous, and at the same time, be most sinful and wicked.

5. That it is no new thing, for a Spirit of damnable Delusions, to shelter it self under the Cloak and Masque of extraordinary Holiness.

6. That it is the Part and Duty, of all the Servants of God, in their severall and respective Places, and Callings, to use all Lawfull means, and endeavours, to stop the further breaking forth of such horrible Delusions, and Destructive Principles.

Having deliver'd these six Propositions, I shall return to prosecute the first.

Which

Which, whilst I am doing, I humbly pray you, to hear me without Prejudice; for the Lord, who knoweth the Secrets of all Hearts, knows that I have none against the Persons of any of the Sons of Men; for I Believe that Christ dy'd as well for them, as for my self, and therefore I cannot hate them: And the Method I shall Observe will be this.

1. I offer to your Consideration the Reasons, why I Judge it dangerous, and unsafe to Congregate with such a People.

2. I shall give you a Prospect of the preposterous and unlucky Dispositions of these Mens Spirits, under this new discovery of theirs, Scisme, I may call it.

3. Give you a Taste of the harsh, bitter, and lamentable Effects, which this new Doctrin of theirs brought forth in the *Common-Wealth* of Israel; which, when we have weigh'd in the Ballance of the *Sanctuary*, we shall easily be perswaded to believe *Solomon*, *That there is no new Thing under the Sun*.

4. Shew you how the Just, Holy, and Righteous God took this Disturbance of the Church's Peace at their Hands, and what a kind of Savour, the Smoak of these Mens *Incense* did send up to Heaven.

6. And Lastly, Consider what the more then probable drift, and design of these Men

might be, which they intended to carry on, under this false Religious Cloak, and I beseech you, *Christians*, that you will mark me warily, whilst I lay down my Reasons for Proof of my first Assertion, that so ye may neither misapprehend me here, nor misreport me abroad, to my Prejudice, and Scandal of others.

The first Reason, why it is dangerous so to Congregate, is

(*Reason, 1.*) Because every particular *Christian*, hath not the special Gift of the Holy-Ghost, to discern Spirits.

Every Man and Woman, in any true measure Professing Christ, may have so much Knowledge, and be so far enlightened, as to be sensible of their Misery, by reason of Sin committed in the State of Nature, to know what Christ hath done for them, in satisfying Gods Justice, and removing the Curse of the Law, and Punishment due to such Sin.

To believe in him for Pardon of Sin, to love and delight to do his Commandments, And yet not have the special Gift of the Holy-Ghost, to discern Spirits.

The Apostle St. Paul, in the 1. Cor. 12. 4. saith. *That there are diversities of Gifts, but the same Spirit that gives them.*

And

And then at ver. 8. reckons them up in order, thus

For to one, is given by the Spirit, the Word of Wisdom; to another, the Word of Knowledge, by the same Spirit;

To another, Faith by the same Spirit; to another, the Gift of Healing, by the same Spirit;

To another, the Working of Miracles, by the same Spirit; to another, Prophecy, by the same Spirit; to another, the Discerning of Spirits; to another, divers kind of Tongues; To another, the Interpretation of Tongues. And then Concludes, thus,

But all these, worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every one severally, as he will.

Knowing then, that there are many lying Spirits, and many false Christs, many false Prophets, and deceitfull Teachers, gone forth into the World, who ever have, and ever will, by their sly Insinuations, endeavour to draw away Disciples after them; and seduce the Servants of Christ, to leave and forsake the plain High-way of Salvation, to go into the by-paths of *Heresie*, and *Scisme*; and so undiscernibly manage their Crafty Devices, that the very elect, choise, and eminent Christians, will hardly escape from being entangled with such Deceits: Now then, seeing that

these things are certainly true, it cannot but be dangerous and unsafe, for the best of *Christians* to venture themselves into any such Congregations, as have made a causeless Separation from such a Church, where the the Word of God is truly taught: Publick Prayer in a Form of sound Words, suitable to every State, and Condition of Men; answerable to all their wants, both for Soul and Body, and all put up to God, in the Name of his only Son *Jesus Christ*: And all this Confirm'd, and Establish'd, by the Successive *Royal Laws*, and *Sacred Statutes, Acts, and Ordinances*, of the most *Christian Kings, Princes, and Parliaments*, that ever were since the *Reformation*, as the *Church of England* is in *Statu quo*.

Our Blessed Saviour, hath assured us, by the words of his Sacred Lips, *That many will come in his Name, and deceive* (not a few but) *many*.

And the *Apostle St. John*, saith, *That there are many Antichrists*, and exhorts them not to believe every Spirit, because many false Prophets were gone forth into the World.

Seeing then, that the number of Deceivers are many, and the Deceived a Thousand times more; I hold it the greatest Wisdom that can be in a *Christian*, to take heed

heed how he adventures into every Congregation of People, least he become one of those many, that *Christ* hath foretold, will certainly be deceived, for want of this special Gift of the *Holy-Ghost*, to discern Spirits.

(*Reason 2.*) A second Reason is, because such Mens Principles, will leave a black Brand of detestable hatred, upon their very Names amongst the Generations of the People of God, that shall Survive them.

For tho' they may prosper for a time, and take their swinge for a time, and run their Wildgoose chase for a time, and tho' they take liberty to kindle these Fires, and compass themselves about with such Sparks; and tho' they walk in the Light of these Fires, and Sparks of their own kindling, yet this shall they have at the hand of the Lord, they shall lie down in Sorrow, and leave a Curse upon their Names, amongst the Surviving Generations.

And this was verified on these very Men in my *Text*, for when the *Genealogies* of the Surviving Tribes, were Numbred and Recorded, there lieth a Blot of Disgrace upon their Names, so that in plain Terms, their Names stunk after they were dead.

The *Record* is to be seen in *Chap. 26.* of the Book of *Numbers*, ver. 7, 8, 9. the Words of the *Record* are these. *These*

These are the Families of the Reubenites, and they that were Numbered of them were Forty and three Thousand, and seven Hundred and Thirty.

And the Sons of Pallu, Eliab.

And the Sons of Eliab, Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This is that Dathan, and Abiram, which were Famous in the Congregation, who strove against Moses, and against Aaron, in that Company of Corah, when they strove against the Lord.

And the Earth opened her Mouth, and swallowed them up, together with Corah, when that Company Died, what time the Fire Devoured two Hundred and Fifty Men; and they became a Sign.

Nor did their Names stink only upon Record, but in the Memories and Thoughts of the Surviveing honest Hearted Israelites; as appeareth by the Words of the Plea of the Daughters of Zelophehad made in open Court for Inheritance of their Fathers; which Plea was also Recorded, and continueth to this Day. Num. 27. ver. 1, 2.

Ver. 1. Then came the Daughters of Zelophehad, the Son of Hephher, the Son of Gilcad, the Son of Machir, the Son of Manasses, the Son of Joseph: And these are the Names of his Daughters, Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah.

And

And they stood before Moses, and Eliazar the Priest, (for Aaron was then Dead) and before the Princes, and all the Congregation, by the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation saying,

Our Father Died in the Wilderness, and he was not in the Company of them that gathered themselves together against the Lord, in the Company of Corah; but died in his own Sin, and had no Sons.

4. Why then should the Name of our Father be done away from amongst his Family, because he hath no Son; give unto us therefore a Possession amongst the Brethren of our Fathers.

5. And Moses brought their Cause before the Lord, and the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

6. The Daughters of Zelophehad, speak right, thou shalt surely give them a Possession of an Inheritance amongst their Fathers Brethren; and thou shalt cause the Inheritance of their Father to pass unto them. By the Contents of which Record, it is evident, that the Remembrance of these Mens Doings, was Odious to Posterity; more Instances we have, as in Simeon, and Levi, Simon Magus, Thudas, Judas of Gallilee, Nicolitans. &c.

Reason 3. Is because the Breath of such Mens Doctrine, is infectious to a sound Judgment; the Sons of Men are as really subject

to Spiritual Infection, as the Body is to that which is Carnal; the Body is not more liable to the Infection of the Plague of Pestilence, than the Judgments of the Sons and Daughters of Men, are to the Plague of Spiritual Delusions.

And this my Assertion, I ground upon Reason, drawn from the Testimonies of Sacred Writ; besides Woful and Daily Experience.

There are three Diseases amongst Men, notably Infections above others, (*viz*) the *Leprosie*, the *Pestilence*, and the *Cancer*, all which three Diseases of the Body, do parallel the three grand Infectious Diseases of the Soul, *viz.* *Disobedience*, *Heresie* and *Scisme*.

The first whereof is Epidemical, and hath Infected all Mankind with the *Leprosie* of Original Sin. The second is more Secret and indiscernable, falling upon sound Constitutions, when they think least on't, even whilest they are Talking and Drinking with their Friend; and concerning this Disease, it is observable that the Party Infected, hath a desire to Infect others, tho' never so near and dear to them; the like desire have all Scismaticks.

The

27

The third Infectious Disease; viz. the *Cancer*, hath its Residence for the most part in the Mouth or Tongue; that they who drink of the same Cup with them, are in danger of Infection.

For Confirmation of this Assertion, I shall give you a Precedent and Precept, from the Sacred Scriptures.

The Precedent is double, and of Lamentable Memory, because the Sin appeared in the Punishment of those that Committed it.

The Precept is alone, yet worthy of a serious notice, because it was Transmitted, by an *Epistle*, from an Universal *Apostle*, to a *Bishop* of a particular Charge 2 *Tim.* 16. 17. 18.

The first Precedent or Example is Recorded in *Numb.* 12. where two prime Servants of God are found Tardy in their Obedience to him, which shewed it self in the Malignant Humour of *Miriam* and *Aarons* Murmuring against *Moses*, who tho' their own Brother, yet under God their Supream Governour; nevertheless, they could say, *Hath the Lord indeed only spoken by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?*

Here was Envy and Emulation at the Government, intrusted by God, in the Hands of *Moses*. Disobedience would undoubtedly

doubtedly have followed; the *Leprosy* of Original Sin, d d cleave so fast to their Loyns, that altho' they were *Saints* upon Earth, yet they were n t quite free from stumbling upon the Threshold of Original Corruption: true Children of Disobedient Parents; *Adam* and *Eve*, our first Parents would set up for themselves and be as Gods. *Miriam* and *Aaron* will Rule and Govern as well as *Moses*: *Hath the Lord indeed* (say they) *spoken onely by Moses?* *Hath he not spoken also by us?* No wonder *Moses* was not angry with his Brother and Sister, for aspiring to share with him in a piece of Earthly Government; when he knew that his own first Parents aspired to an Heavenly Throne, by endeavouring to be as Gods. Nay, *Aaron* in another sinful *Act* of his outdid his *Progenitors*; for they presumed to be but as Gods, to know Good and Evil; but *Aaron* presumed to make a God; nay, to make many Gods; *Make us Gods*, saith sinful *Israel*; *that may go before us*. *Bring your Ear rings*, saith *Aaron*, *and I'll make you some*.

Original Sin. like a *Snow ball*, gathers by rolling from place to place.

The same Serpent that perswaded our first Parents to conceit themselves Gods, hath prevailed

prevailed with *Aaron*, not to conceit himself to be one, but take upon him the Employment of making a God, and so to be greater than God. For as he that makes a King, is said to be greater then a King; so he that makes a God, may conceit himself greater than the God he hath made. O the horrible Contagion, and Infection of Original Sin, which like a foul *Leprosie*, hath spread it self into the whole Masse of Mankind.

And as thus the *Leprosie* of Original Sin, had spread it self into the several Faculties of *Miriam's* and *Aaron's* Soul; so the Lord Plag ed *Miriam*, with a foul *Leprosie*, in several parts of her Body; a Punishment suitable to her Sin.

If it should here be askt why *Aaron* guilty of the same Sin with his Sister *Miriam*, was not Plagued with the same Punishment of *Leprosie*, as she was, according to the rule of Justice, the same Sin, the same Punishment: I answer, it is true, the Lord might in Justice have smitten *Aaron* with the Plague of *Leprosie*, as he did *Miriam*, but he did not; he spared *Aaron*, and Punished *Miriam*, and that for several good and weighty Reasons, as I humbly conceive.

1. That

1. That the Church, and all the World may know, that he hath two Hands as well as two Eyes, the one to lay on the stroak of Justice, and the other, to extend Grace and Mercy ; that he is Mercy as well as Justice ; and Judgment as well as Mercy.

2. That the Sons of Men may know, that God is a free Agent, and may do with his own what he pleaseth ; that he can have Mercy upon whom he will have Mercy, and Punish others for the Iniquity of their Transgressions, and leave them to the hardness of their own Hearts.

3. The Sin was greater in *Miriam*, then in *Aaron*; *Aaron* might have a seeming colour for what he said, having formerly been *Moses's* Speaker for God, to *Pharaoh*: but for *Miriam* to assume the Privelege of a Speaker, was neither proper to her Sex, nor ever an Office in the Church for a "Woman" to Execute. *I permit not a Woman* (saith St. Paul) *to Speak in the Church.*

4. *Aarons* Office might excuse him, and speak something for him, being by a special Decree and Ordinance of God, Anointed with Holy Oyl, *High Priest*, to offer Sacrifice for the Sins of all *Israel*, and no *Leper* was to Officiate in that calling, nor stand

stand at Gods Altar; so that the Purity of his Office, freed him from that foul and loathsom Punishment of the Plague of *Leprosie*; God's Altar was nor a fit place for a Deformed Person to stand at, to offer *Sacrifices*, therefore, for the Glory of his Name, and the Holiness of his Altar, he exempted the *Sacrificer* from the Punishment of so loathsom a Disease; altho' he went not Scot-free, for for this, and other failings; he was debarr'd both of the sight and enterance into the Land of *Canaan*; the Land of Promise.

5. It might probable be, that *Aaron* was not Principal, but Accessary to this Sin, for *Miriam* is first named in the *Text*, *Numb. 12. And Miriam, and Aaron, spake against Moses, because of the Æthiopian Woman, whom he had Married.* If she had not been Principal in the Sin, its very likely, she had not been named first in the Inditement: And it is very likely, that the Quarrel began betwixt the two Sisters In-law *Ziporah* and *Miriam*, about what I know not; but be it what it will, *Miriam* hath engaged her Brother *Aaron* in the Quarrel; and both of them knew, that *Moses* was so Just, and so good a Man, that if the matter on *Ziporah's* part, were
not

not a Breach of God's Sacred Law, he was bound by the Sacred Tye of Marriage, to Vindicate her, against them both; they resolve therefore to bring him in for a Party, and make him Faulty for such a Choice, and so begin a Quarrel with him; who it may be knew nothing of their Discontents.

Dr. Hall, late Bishop of Norwich, that English Seneca, that Painful, Pious Ecclesiast, in his *Contemplations*, on the Holy Story, hath an excellent Passage upon this Place. *Lib. 6 Pag. 196. in Uſ.*

Miriam and Aaron, are in Mutiny against Moses. Who is so Holy that Sins not? what Sin is so unnatural, that the best can avoid without God's preventing Grace,

Who can but grieve to see Aaron at the end of so many Sins: Of late I saw him Carving the Molten Image; and Consecrating an Altar to a False God; now I see him seconding an unkind Mutiny against his Brother; both find him Accessary, neither Principal, in the first Sin of Mankind, the Serpent, who was Principal in it, found no Mercy nor Grace: Whereas Adam and his Wife who were but Accessaries, had upon their Repentance, the offer of both, and therefore,

6. A sixth Reason, why *Aaron* escaped the Punishment inflicted upon *Miriam*, was, because of his speedy Repentance; for no sooner did he perceive the Leprosie upon *Miriams* Face, he knew there was but one way to escape that, or a greater punishment, viz. a Confession of Sin, and a speedy Repentance. And therefore, having offended his Brother *Moses*, he first asketh him Forgiveness, saying, *Alas, my Lord, lay not this Sin upon us; wherein we have done Foolishly, and wherein we have Sinned.* The universal Antidote against all Gods Judgments, is Unfeigned and speedy Repentance.

Had *Miriam* Repented at the Word of the Lord to her, as *Aaron* did, at the Hand of the Lord upon her 'tis very likely that she had escaped the Leprosie, as well as he; for that God, who is rich in Mercy to one, is rich in Mercy to all that Unfeignedly call upon him for it; as *Aaron* here did; but as for *Miriam*, she neither Confessed her Sin, nor shew'd any Sorrow for it, but stubbornly persisted in it; For notwithstanding, God Arraigned her himself, and sat himself as Judge in *Moses's* Cause, and ask'd her, why she was not affraid to speak against his Servant *Moses*; she made no Reply, by an humble Plea for Mercy, but

D

stood

stood as a fullen *Mute*, and so God recorded her, and left her to Judgment, and departs from her in great Fury. *Num. 12 9.*

2. The second Infectious *Disease*, is the *Pestilence*, which prevails mightily by Infection, killing Thousands in a short time. So doth the Plague of Spiritual Delusions Infect and Destroy many Thousands of Souls in a very few Days.

And that these Mens Principles (in my *Text*) had the same Effect, it was too apparent in their Punishment, and one may read their Sin in their Punishment. And that there was a Spiritual Plague sore broken, and running upon these Mens Spirits. It is evident by the Injunction, which God laid upon the rest of the People, to depart from them, and not to come near them, nor touch any thing of theirs, lest their Sin should Infect them, and they perish with them in their Sins.

And so Infectious, was it to many Thousands in *Israel*, that it brake forth upon them on the Morrow, and in a Congregated Assembly, Murmured against *Moses*, and told him, *he had Killed the People of the Lord.*

How nearly doth Heresie in the Soul resemble the *Pestilence* in the Body, for as fast as that loathsome *Disease* cleaves to the
Body

Body, so fast doth *Heresie* stick in the Soul and Heart of a Man. For as it is a very difficult thing, and almost Impossible for a *Physitian* to heal the Plague of *Pestilence* in the Body.

So it is a very hard and difficult thing, for the best *Majestrate*, or the best *Minister* in the World, to reclaim any Man or Woman from the Error of their way, that have forsaken the Publick Service of God, the High-way of Salvation, and betook themselves to the By-paths of a *Pestilential Conventicle* one Year. Hence it is that the Apostle *St. Paul*, Exhorts *Titus* to Reject A Man that is an *Heretick*, after the first and second Admonition. And subjoyns this Reason, *Knowing that he that is such, is subverted and Sinneth, being Condemned of himself.* Titus. 3. 10, 11.

Now you may happily ask what an *Heretick* is. I Answer.

A *Heretick*, is one that obstinately Defends and Maintains an Opinion contrary to the Faith, Practice, and Profession of the truly Antient, Catholick, and Apostolick Church.

But ye may happily say, why doth the Apostle Exhort *Titus* to be so quick, and brief, in Admonishing such an one, and

upon a second Contempt, immediately to reject him. 1 Answer.

Answer. Because they have refused the way of Truth, and chosen and preferred an Erroneous Opinion be ore it, and obstinately refuse to return again.

This assertion is verified by the Testimony of the Prophet *Jerem. Chap. 6. ver. 16.* Thus saith the Lord. Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find Rest for your Souls. This was the first Admonition, the Prophet gave them after their Revolt, unto which, they obstinately answered, *We will not walk therein.* The second word of Admonition is in *ver. 17* Also I set Watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the Trumpet. Unto which, they made this stubborn Answer, *We will not Hearken.* Upon this their refusal after their second Admonition to return to the antient ways of God, the Prophet proceeds in the name of the Lord, to give Judgment upon them in *ver. 18. 19.*

Therefore hear, ye Nations, and know, O Congregation, what is among them. Hear, O Earth, behold I will bring Evil upon this People, even the Fruit of their Thoughts; because
they

they have not hearkened unto my Words, nor to my Law, but rejected it.

Twice did these Men in my Text, return a stubborn Answer to Moses, that they would not return to their former Conformity, but desperately resolved to stick close to their former Remonstrance; for when Moses sent for Dathan, and Abiram, the Sons of Eliab, to come to him, (doubtless to perswade and advise with them, to forbear the further Prosecution of their wicked Designs and to consider the manifold mischiefs, that would unavoidably follow such wicked enterprizes, as they were now beginning to prosecute) then they returned this resolute Answer, *We will not come up*; and aggravated it with this Expostulation.

Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a Land that floweth with Milk and Honey, to kill us in the Wilderness except thou make thy self altogether a Prince over us? ver. 13. and then in ver. 14. They follow their blow, with a *Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a Land that floweth with Milk and Honey, or given us Inheritance of Fields, and Vineyards: Wilt thou put out the Eyes of these Men? We will not come up.*

Upon this second Repulse of theirs to *Moses's* Admonition, he utterly Rejects them, and now will have no more to do with them; but turns his Prayer directly against them. And in the Indignation of his Spirit, said unto the Lord, *Respect not thou their Offering.*

And what the Effect of such a Prayer was like to be, may be easily read in the Judgment that followed; for the Earth opened her Mouth, and swallowed them up, with all that appertain'd to them, and I wish with all my Heart, that these Mens Principles had sunck into the Ground with them, and never appear'd again upon the face of Earth, but *va mihi.*

3. A third Infectious Disease in the Body of Man, is the *Cancer*, a sore fretting Disease, very small in the begining, dangerous in growth and pernicious in the end.

Such is all *Scismatical* and false Doctrine, in the beginning scarcely discern'd, but by degrees it eats so far into the Soul, that it destroys both Faith and Practice.

We have this confirm'd. by the Apostle *St. Paul*, in an Epistle of his to the chief Pastor of the Church of *Ephesus* 2. *Tim.* 2 Cap. 16. 17. 18. *ver.* But shun prophane Bablings, for they will increase unto more Ungodliness. And their Word will eat as doth a Canker,

Canker; of whom is Hymeneus, and Philetus. Who concerning the truth have erred, saying, That the Resurrection is past already; and overthrow the Faith of some.

O Lord, for thy Mercy sake, save and deliver thy Church and People, in the Kingdoms of *England*, and *Ireland*; and the Religion Established by Law therein, from the sly insinuating, creeping, Soul-infectious, Diseases of *Sedition*, *Privy Conspiracy*, and *Rebellion*; *false Doctrine*, *Heresie* and *Scisme*; and work in us such a Reformation in all our Lives, that our Conversations before God and Man, may be such, as may beautifie, and adorn our most Holy Faith, and demonstrate to the World, that we are living Members of Christ's Body.

I have now finished my third Rational Proof, of the danger, hazard, and Jeopardy, which unstable Souls incur, by gladding from their Mothers House, to enquire after strange *Novelties*; and to exchange a good old Way, for a deceitfull By-path; and I have insisted the longer upon it, out of Duty to my Mother (the *Church of England*) and the Testimony of a good Conscience towards my Brethren; whose Feet yet stand fast in the High-way of Salvation, to keep them steady, and fast there-

in; and out of Love, and Pity to my Brethren, and Friends that have made an unkind Separation from us: if possible to recover them back again, that they may be as formerly, they have been Ornaments of Grace, to our Assemblies; and let them think of me what they will, I still retain an unfeigned Love, and Respect for their Immortal and Precious Souls.

Reason 4. Such Mens Principles, do lead Souls into a state of Rebellion, not only against Man, but even against God himself: and under pretence of taking faster hold of Religion, and getting nearer unto God, do throw themselves into the Pit of Error, and shake hands with their Allegiance to their Lawfull Governors, as these pretended Saints did; for which, the Lord himself gives them the Title, and Epithite of Rebels, 17 Chap. 10 ver. And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring Aarons Rod again before the Testimony, to be kept for a token against the Rebels.

These were once a People conformable to the Word and Will of God, walking in all the Laws and Ordinances of the Lord, and then God called them his People, and own'd them for his Church, Testified by the word of the Lord to Moses, Exod. 3.

7, 8, 9. *And the Lord said, I have surely seen the Afflictions of my People which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their Task masters; for I know their Sorrows.*

And I am come down to deliver them out of the Hands of the Egyptians. Now therefore behold, the cry of the Children of Israel is come unto me; and I have seen the Oppression wherewith the Egyptians Oppress them.

Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my People, the Children of Israel out of Egypt.

Here ye see, he owns them for his People, and calls them Children of Israel, the Seed of Jacob his chosen.

And afterwards commends them, for acknowledging his Rule and Government over them, by the Hand and Word of Moses, when they spake thus to him at the Foot of Mount Sinai. Goe ye near, (say they) and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, and speak thou unto us all, that the Lord our God, shall Speake unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it.

And the Lord heard the Voice of your words, (saith Moses) when ye spake unto me, and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the Voice of the Words of the People, which they have spoken unto thee, they have well spoken. Deut. 5. 27, 28.

Thrice

Thrice besides this time, had they made the like Protestation in *Exo. 19. 2.*

They departed from Rephidim, and were come to the Desert of Sinai, and encamp'd before the Mount.

And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the Mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say unto the House of Jacob, and tell the Children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on Eagles Wings, and brought you unto myself.

Now therefore, if ye will Obey my Voice indeed, and keep my Covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all People; for all the Earth is mine.

And ye shall be unto me a Kingdom of Priests and an holy Nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the Children of Israel.

And Moses came and called for the Elders of the People, and laid before their Faces all these words which the Lord commanded him.

And all the People answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken that will we do. and Moses returned the Words of the People unto the Lord.

*And at another time *Exod. 24. 3.**

Moses

Moses came and told the People all the words of the Lord, and all the Judgments; and all the People answered with one Voice, and said, *All the Words which the Lord hath said, will we do.*

And again at ver. 7. *Moses took the Book of the Covenant, and Read in the Audience of the People, and they said, All that the Lord hath said, will we do, and be Obedient.*

Now who would ever have thought, that these Men, after such Solemn Vows, Promises, and Protestations, made in the hearing of God, Angels and Men, would so soon after, as they did utterly renounce and deny them; and wipe their Mouths with a clean Handkerchief of pretended Holyness, as if they had never promised any such thing at all.

To day they promise to obey him in all things, and in a short time after, in an assaulting manner, tell him to his Face, *That he took too much upon him, to lift up himself above them, to exercise Authority in Commanding them, or shewing them their Duty*; and this so unexpectedly to Moses, that with astonishment and wonder. he fell upon his Face, and admires that such formerly so good Subjects, should now turn Rebels: For he only is a
Rebel,

Rebel which was a good Subject, and afterwards Revolts from his obedience,

O that I could say, that that subtil insinuating Beast, that old serpent, which is called the Devil and Satan, had not in our Daies put into practice, and acted upon the Stage o the World, the like, nay worse things by many Degrees, if worse may be against a Faithfull, Pious, Prudent Prince to his Subjects, as ever *Moses* was to the People under him, all Circumstances considered, I mean King *Charles I.* of Blessed Memory.

For who would have believed? Or who would have thought that those *English Patriots*, Seir-named the *Long Parliament*? Legally Elected, to sit there for the Service of God, their King, and Country: after they had at the beginning of their Session taken the Oaths of *Allegiance* and *Supremacie*; and within a while after form'd, and took a Solemn Protestation, explaining the sence and meaning of them both, and in such a form of dreadfull Words, which I would not here incert, did Inot fear from many Symptoms apparent, that there are yet some Men alive, sick of the same Disease; and are still sitting to hatch the *Cockatrice* Egg, the Fruit where

whereof may ' if God in Mercy prevent it
not prove a fiery flying Serpent.

The Protestation generally ordered to be ta-
ken, *Die Mercu. 5 May, 1641.*

I A. B. Do in the Presence of Almighty God,
Promise, Vow, and Protest to maintain, and
defend, as far as Lawfully I may, with my Life,
Power, and Estate, the true Reformed Protestant
Religion, expressed in the Doctrine of the Church
of England; against all Popery, and Popish
Innovations, within this Realm, contrary to the
same; and according to the Duty of my Allegiance
to His Majesties Royal Person, Honor, and Estate;
as also the Power, and Privileges of Parliament,
the Lawful Rights and Liberties of the Subject;
and every Person, that makes this Protestation
in whatsoever, he shall do in the Lawfull pursu-
ance of the same. And to my Power as far as
Lawfully I may, I will oppose, and by all good
ways and means, endeavour to bring to Consigne
Punishment all such as shall either by Force,
Practice, Councils, Plots, Conspiracies, or other-
wise, do any thing to the contrary of any thing in
this present Protestation contained. And further
that I shall in all Just and Honorable wars,
endeavour to preserve the Union and Peace be-
tween the Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and
Ireland and neither for Fear, Hope, nor other
Respect,

- *Respect, shall Relinquish this Promise, Vow, and Protestation.*

Now what could be more said to Testifie and declare Loyalty, and Allegiance then these Men did, in this their Protestation, and who ever performed less? For in a short time after, they violated every Branch of it, and like mad Men tore it all to pieces; so that in them was fulfilled the word of the Lord, by the Prophet *Hosea, The Spiritual Man is mad.* Nay, like worse than *Bedlams*, who violate themselves no farther then their Garments, and the Hair of their Heads; but these Men stript not the Body only (which are all the Kings Subjects, the whole Common-wealth, of their Garments of Justice, Equity, and Right, Law, and Property, Reason, and Religion, but the Head of all its Hair, that is, the King of his *Militia*; and proceeded yet further in their Madnes, as to tear their own Head, the Head of their own King) from their own Body, the Body of the Common-wealth.

All which the Engine of Rebellion Com-pleated, for so that Blessed Martyr Stiles it, and compares the creeping Insinuations of it, to an Instrument with Screws, which moves, and Screws Men on (1) to question the Lawfull Commands of Superiors; then

(2) to dislike them. (3) then to disobey them
 (4) then to resist them. (5) after that to assault them. (7) and at last to embrew their Hands in the Sacred Blood of their Prince.

Not much unlike to this Comparison of Rebellion to an Engine with Screws, doth the Prophet *Samuel* compare Rebellion to Witchcraft: Now Witchcraft, is a deceitfull Cheat, and hath these seven Devils Heads growing upon its Shoulders.

1. To be that in appearance, which in Subtance it is not.

2. To promise what it never performeth.

3. To envy the happy Estate of others.

4. To Bless and Curse with one Breath.

5. To pretend that what it Acts, is done by the Power of God, and good Prayers.

6. To please it self in doing Mischief.

7. To be hardned with Impenitency.

Now what smart proficient, these Men in my *Text*, were in this Cursed Act, their Life and Death plainly shew'd.

1. They were Saints in their Words, but in their Actions wicked Men.

2. They promise that Obedience, which they never performed.

3. They envy the happiness of *Moses* and *Aaron*, *Psal. 106. 16. They envied Moses also in the Camp, and Aaron the Saint of the Lord.*

4. They

4. They call *Moses*, their Lord to day, and cry him down for an *Usurper* to-morrow. Deliver their *Sacrifices* into *Aarons* Hands to day, and wrest the Office of a *Sacrificer*, out of his Hands to-morrow. Hence *Moses* charged them with this presumption, *ver.* 10, 11. *And seek ye the Priesthood also, and for which Cause, both thou and all thy Company are gathered against the Lord.*

5. That they pretend d the Power of God amongst them; it hath been already proved out of their own Mouths, *ver.* 3.

6. That they did delight in Mischief, their gathering the People together against the *Rulers*, which God had placed over them, was a clear Evidence.

7. And that they dyed (under the Charms of Spiritual Witchcraft) Impenitent Rebels, the just Judgment of God did plainly shew.

Reason 5. Such Mens Principles if hearkned to, and followed, will lead unstable Souls into a State of Reprobation.

And indeed, there is little or no difference betwixt a *Rebel*, and a *Reprobate*: If ye call a Man a *Rebel*, ye call him a *Reprobate*, and if he be really the one, he is certainly the other.

They are inseparable Companions; for he only is a *Reprobate*, that hath once known the

the Truth, and in some measure profess it, and at last withdraws his Affection from it, and gives himself up to follow the Dictates of his own unstable Heart.

Here comes in *R*eprobation in its right place, for he is not a *Reprobate*, that dieth in the State of natural blindness, and ignorance of God and his Ways; but he that hath known both, and revolts from them, this Man is a right *Reprobate*.

Five times in the *Sacred Scriptures*, is the word *Reprobate* mentioned, and in every one of them the word bears the same Sence.

The Prophet *Jeremiah*, is the first that mentions it, *Chap. 6. 30.* (he was a Prophet Ordained of God before he was born, to be a Teacher to the Nations, and Sanctified from his Mothers Womb; to shew them the true and right way to eternal Happiness; and therefore perfectly knew what *Epithite*, to give to every one of them, in their several Degrees and Stations; and he hath given the unstable and Revolting *Israelites*, the *Epithite* of *Reprobate*, *Chap. 6. 30.*

Reprobate Silver shall Men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.

The *Latin Translation* renders it thus,

*Argentum reprobum vocantur illi, quia Re-
probat Jehova illos.*

So that by the *Latin Translation*, and our *English Translation* compared, the Words *Reprobate* and *Reject* have one Signification.

And why did the Lord *Reject* and call them *Reprobates*? Why verily the Prophet himself, hath shew'd it unto us in such large Characters, that he that runs may read it, except he willfully shuts his Eyes, and resolves not to see it; it is set down in *ver. 16, 17, 18, 19.*

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your Souls; but they said, We will not walk therein.

Also I set Watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the Trumpet; but they said, We will not hearken.

Therefore hear, ye Nations, and know O Congregation, what is among them.

Hear, O Earth, behold, I will bring Evil upon this People, even the Fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkned unto my Word, nor to my Law, but Rejected it.

From hence it is evident, that by their first Revolting from their antient Paths, and good old Ways, which God had bounded out for them, by the Ministry of his Word, and Authority of those Watchmen, or Overseers,

seers, whom he had set over them; and their Contumacious Refusal to return to them again, they Reprobated themselves, and so God Rejected them, and calls them grievous Revolvers, walking with Slanders, out-facing with brazen Impudency, the Commands of their Governors, *ver. 28.* (and at last Proclaims them by the Mouth of the Prophet) *Reprobate Silver shall Men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.*

2. The second, that mentions it, is the Apostle St. Paul, *Romans 1. 28.* God gave them over to a Reprobate Mind, the Reason for it, he gives in the former part of the *ver.* in these words, *And even as they did not like to retain God in their Knowledge, So God gave them over to a Reprobate mind.*

The next place is likewise a Testimony of the same Author 2. *Cor. 13. 5*

Examin your selves, whether ye be in the Faith; prov: your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates?

Now that many of this Church, to whom he thus writes, were Revolting from the Truth, (which they had formerly embraced) and Scismatically going off from the Body of the Church; of which by an outward Profession, they had for a long time been Mem-

bers, its evident from several passages in both his *Epistles* to them.

1. He calls them the Church of God at *Corinth. 1 Cor. 1. 2.*

2. Thanks God for them, that they were enriched with all Utterance and Knowledge; and that they came behind in no Gift, *1. 1. 4, 7.*

3. Persuades them to unity of Judgment, and avoiding of Divisions, yea, beseeches them in these Words, *1. Cor. 1. 10. I Beseech you, Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, (that is, in the Name of our Anointed Saviour) that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no Divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same Judgment.*

4. Checks them, for entertaining several Errors, as the eating of Meat offered to Idols, contrary to the *Apostolical Decree at Jerusalem*, which he brought from thence in his own Person, and delivered to them with his own Hands, *Chap. 8.*

5. Reproves them, for Praying in the Church with their Heads cover'd, *Chap. 11.*

6. For Prophaning the Lords Supper, by their undecent carriage at the Communion thereof, *Chap. 11.*

7. Sharply Rebukes them, for denying the Resurrection of the Dead, *Chap. 15.*

All

All which Errors, being directly contrary to their former Faith, and Profession of the Gospel, which they received and embraced at his first Preaching of the Gospel to them; he earnestly exhorts them to a serious Examination of their present and former State, and so to make a speedy return to their first love of the Truth, from which, they were now falling into a State of Reprobation,

The fourth place where the word *Reprobate* is mentioned, is in *Pauls second Epistle to Timothy*, 3. 8. 13. 14,

As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the Truth: Men of corrupt minds; Reprobate concerning the Faith.

But evil men, and Seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and has been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.

These Men, whom he here calls *Reprobates*, must needs have Relation to them, whom he names in the first Chap. of his two *Epistles to Timothy*, the first Bishop of the Church of *Ephesus*.

In the 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. He names *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, whom, he there saith, he had delivered up to Satan, for making a Shipwrack of Faith, and a good Conscience, ver. 19.

Now I am apt to think that this *Hymeneus*, whom he mentions here, is the same whom he mentions in his second *Epistle Chap. 2. ver. 17. And their word will eat as doth a Cancer : of whom are Hymeneus and Phileus.*

Who concerning the Truth have erred, saying, That the Resurrection is past already, and overthrow the Faith of some : That is, throw them into a State of Reprobation.

Two others he names, in *2 Tim. 1. 15. This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia are turned away from me ; (that is are turned Reprobates, and have forsaken their first love to the Truth) of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.*

Hold fast the form of sound Words, which thou hast heard of me, ver. 13. And I am apt to believe that the former mentioned Alexander, is the same he bids Timothy beware of, 2 Tim. 4. 14, 15. Alexander the Copper-smith did me much evil ; the Lord Reward him according to his Works.

Of whom be thou aware also ; for he hath greatly withstood our Words.

There can be no greater Enemies to the Truth, then those that once profess it, and at last revolt from it.

I am further apt to think, that this *Alexander*, is the same that took *Pauls* part in the uproare

uproare at *Ephesus*) against the Priests of *Diana's Temple*, Acts 19. 33. And they drew Alexander out of the Multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with his hand, and would have made his defence unto the People.

But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one Voice, about the space of two Hours, cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

But whither it were the same, or some other of that name, he made himself a Reprobate to his Faith, and Profession of the Gospel.

And thus much briefly to the fifth Reason, to prove it dangerous and unsafe for *Christians* to Congregate themselves with any such People, tho' never so full of Knowledge and seeming Holyness; that do deny Conformity to such *Laws*, and *Ordinances*, which God hath given to them, by the Hands of faithful Governours.

2. I am come now to the second thing considered in the Explication, and therein to shew you what some of the Preposterous and unlucky Dispositions of these Mens Spirits were, under such specious Pretences, and first,

It did manifestly appear, that they were of a proud Spirit, Pride had overcome their Wits,

(as we usually say of an haughty Person) they were proud of their extraordinary Gifts and parts, by which they had gotten a Name amongst the discontented *Israelites*, and a seditious party amongst them, I mean among that party of them, that were so, for many of them stood fast to God, and his Servant *Moses*, in observing the Rules of that Religion, which contained a prescript Form of *Laws* and *Ordinances*, cemented, with harmless and inoffensive Ceremonies, as ye have already heard, and which they, themselves once promised to observe and keep.

But now their Spiritual Pride was such, and their Minds so estranged from that their Promise and Profession, that they dare tell him to his Face, *That he took too much upon him, to lift up himself above them.*

This one Fly of Spiritual Pride, had utterly mar'd their whole Box of Sacred Ointment, (manifest in their former Submission and Obedience) and engaged the Lord to oppose them.

Had not Spiritual Pride been the Root of their Sin, the Lord had not set himself against them, for the humble and poor in Spirit, are his joy and Delight: but the proud and haughty in Spirit, are the Objects of his hatred and contempt.

The

The Princely Psalmist affirms it, *Psal.* 138. 6. *Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly; but the proud he knoweth afar off. And another Scripture saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth Grace to the Humble. James 4. 6.*

But the Apostle St. Peter, is much larger in this point, *1 Pet. 5. 5. Likewise ye Younger, submit your selves unto the Elder; yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with Humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth Grace to the humble.*

Both of these Apostles have their Quotation from Solomon, who in the Original is larger then both, *Proverbs 3. 33. 34. 35.*

The Curse of the Lord, is in the House of the Wicked: But he bleſſeth the Habitation of the Just.

Surely he scorneth the Scorners; but he giveth Grace unto the lowly.

The Wise shall inherite Glory, but shame shall be the promotion of Fools.

Spiritual Pride, tho' it be an horrible Sin, yet it is very hard to be discerned.

The Apostle St. Paul, was very near falling into this Sin, and very likly he was for it, as he Testifies himself, *2 Cor. 12. 7. Least I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of Revelations, there*

was given to me a Thorn in the Flesh, the Messenger of Satan to buffet me. The pricking Briers, of Hunger, Cold, Nakedness, Reproaches, Necessities, Distresses for Christ, ver. 9, 10.

O my Friends, with Grief I speak it, it was spiritual Pride, that laid the Corner-Stone of *England's* late and Lamentable Miseries, Acted by a Company of Pretended Saints, who never left exalting themselves till they had trod upon the Crown, and Dignity of the Lords Anointed, (and at that time, with him, the true Protestant Religion, and all the Devout and Sincere Professors thereof) and at last Murdered him, at the Gates of his own Palace, and trampled his Sacred Blood under their base and dirty Feet.

All this the Pride of their Spirit carried them forth, to Enact against, as sweetly qualified, and as bravely an accomplished Prince, as ever breathed upon the face of the of the Earth, (still I say) *Jesus Christ* excepted.

Nor is it to be doubted, but these spiritual proud Men in my *Text*, had not God, by a sudden overthrow prevented them, would have served *Moses*, and *Aaron* with the same Sauce, having already drawn up a Charge against them as implacable Enemies, to the Liberty they aimed at, and Murdering so many of the People of the Lord. (as they called

call'd themselves) altho' they were Eye Witnesses, that it was the immediate Hand of God, that struck some of them Dead with Fire; and that the Earth of her own accord, opened her Mouth, and swallowed up the rest.

O Lord, for thy Mercies sake, save us for the time to come, from such evil proud Spirits. And I beseech you, my Brethren, and Friends, hear and receive King Solomon's advice, *Prov. 25. 21. My Son, fear thou the Lord, and the King, and meddle not with them, that are given to change, for their Calamity shall rise suddenly.*

For every one that is proud in Heart, is an abomination to the Lord; tho' hand joyn in hand, he shall not go unpunished.

The Lord will destroy the House of the proud.
Prov. 16.

And elsewhere he saith, *A Mans pride shall bring him low; but honour shall uphold the humble in Spirit. Prov. 29. 23.*

There is a Day of Account coming, and it draws very near; it is called, *The Day of the Lord of Hosts.* And the Prophet Isa. saith, *That the Day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and they shall be brought low.*

And again in *Chap. 28. 1.* he crieth out against this Sin, in denouncing a Woe against it, saying,

Wo to the Crown of Pride, the Crown of Pride shall be troden under Foot. We cannot read of proud Persons in the Scripture, but we shall read of their downfall.

2. They were of a self-conceited Spirit, they thought none better, nor Holyer then themselves, for if they would have given the preference to any, they would surely have given it to *Moses*, whom the Son of God thought worthy to keep him Company fourty Days, and fourty Nights at one time. And afterwards on the Mount, at his Transfiguration, *Mat. 17.*

And this, they knew fullwell, as the Sacred Record assures us, in *Exo. 24. 1. 2. 3.*

And he said unto Moses, come up unto the Lord, thou and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the Elders of Israel; and Worship ye afar off.

And Moses alone shall come near the Lord; but they shall not come nigh, neither shall the People go up with him.

And Moses came and told the People all the Words of the Lord, and all the Judgments; and all the People answered with one Voice, and said, All the Words which the Lord hath said, will we do.

It doth not appear that at this time, there was one Dissenter, or Nonconformist amongst them.

And

And yet within a little time after, a few seditions *Israelites*, whereof *Corah* was chief; had so seduced the Church of God in *Israel*, that it God had not appeared himself, with a mighty Hand, and stretched out Arm of Heavenly Power, they would not only have denied *Moses* the Supremacy over them, but have brought his Neck to the Block, or otherwise have ended his Days by some violent Death, for they often spake of Stoning him.

Thus you see, that for all their pretended Holyness, they shut their Eyes, and will not see, nor open their Ears to Harken to God, nor the Rulers of his Church.

For Instance, take the Word of God *Num.* 12. 5. *And the Lord came down in the Pillar of the Cloud, and stood in the Door of the Tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forth.*

And he said, Hear^r now my Words; if there be a Prophet among you, I the Lord will make my self known unto him in a Vision, and will speak unto him in a Dream.

My Servant *Moses* is not so, who is Faithful in all my House.

With him will I speak Mouth to Mouth, even apparently, and not in dark Speeches; and the Similitude of the Lord shall he behold, wherefore then

*then were ye not afraid to speak against my
Servant Moses.*

*And the Anger of the Lord was kindled against
them, and he departed.*

There are seven things to be enquired into, from this Proof.

1. Which of the three Persons in the God-Head, it was, that came down from Heaven in the Pillar of the Cloud; the Son of God it was, no doubt.

2. What his business was, that he came about, *viz.* to Examine two Criminals, to Arraign, and Judge them.

3. What their Crime was, *viz.* Speaking against *Moses*.

4. *Aarons* Penitency, and the benefit of his Clergy.

5. *Mariams* Impenitency, and Punishment.

6. *Moses's* Pity, and Prayer for her, which voided the perpetuity of the Sentence.

7. The fairness of the Tryal, he stood in the Door of the Tabernacle, that all *Israel* might hear, and see, and take warning.

God might have spoken so loud, that Heaven and Earth should have heard it, so as they should not have need to come forth for Audience; but now he calls them out to the Bar, (that they may be seen) it did not content him, to chide them within Doors; the
shame

shame of their Fault, had been lesser, in a private Rebuke, but the Seandal of it, required open Reproof.

From these seven Considerations, I have Collected these Observations.

1. That God, is the God of Order, Rule, and Government ; their Repining was publick ; and where the Sin is not affraid of the Light, God loves not the Reproof should be smothered.

2. That it is a greater Sin, than Men are aware of, to speak against the Rule, and Order of Government, either in Church, or State.

3. That in the end, God will severely punish all such Dispisers, of such Rule, Order, and Government.

There are two Evangelical Witnesses to these three Points *Peter*, and *Jude*, both of them Apostles to *Christ*.

Peters Testimony, is Recorded in his first Epistle, 2 Chap. 13; 14. *Ver. Submit yourselves to every Ordinance of Man, for the Lords sake ; whether it be to the King as Supreme.*

Or unto Governours, as unto them, that are sent of him, for the Punishment of Evil Doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

And to this he adds, 2. Epistle, 2. to assure us that, *Such there are, and have been, as do*

do speak Evil of Government, and shall not go unpunished.

Ver. 9, 10. *The Lord, knows how to deliver the Godly out of Temptation; and to reserve the Unjust, unto the Day of Judgment, to be Punished.*

But chiefly them that walk after the Flesh, and despise Government, Presumptuous are they, Self-will'd, they are not afraid to speak Evil of Dignities. The Apostle Jude, Harps on the same String; and particularizeth these Men in my Text, at ver. 11. *Wo unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the Error of Balaam for Reward, and Perish in the gain-saying of Corah.*

And then at ver. 19. gives a Mark, how to know them, saying, *These are they, which separate themselves, sensual, not having the Spirit; tho' they said they had.*

3. They were of a self confident Spirit, they were confident in themselves, that God would own them in their design.

For when Moses Summoned them to Appear before the Lord, to answer to their Seditious Words; they accepted the Challenge, and undertook to dispute it before the Lord in a Religious Duty, too manifest in ver. 19, 17, 18, 19. in these Words,

And

And Moses said unto Corah, be thou, and all thy Company, before the Lord, thou and they, and Aaron to Morrow.

And take every Man his Censer, and put Incense thereon; and bring ye before the Lord, every Man his Censer, two Hundred and Fifty Censers, thou also, and Aaron, each one his Censer.

And they took every Man his Censer, and put Fire in them, and laid Incense thereon, and stood in the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, with Moses and Aaron, Cheek by Jole with them.

And Corah, gathered all the Congregation against them, (either by some Solemn League, and Covenant, or some Engagement or other) unto the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and the Glory of the Lord appeared.

There never was such a Challenge made in the Church of God upon Earth, before or since; never such apparent Confidence in a Seditious Party, to accept of, and answer it, known, or heard of, altho' some People of our times, have shreudly imitated them.

Nor did ever such a Stickler appear in a Quarrel; for God himself appeared on Moses and Aarons side; and at his first enterance on the Stage, which was the Tabernacle, he gave the Spectators a glimpse of his Glory;

and made bare his Arm, and uttered with his Lips, these dreadful Words, *ver. 21.*

Separate your selves from among this Congregation, that I may consume them in a Moment.

As if God had said, *Moses, and Aaron,* stand ye by, and let me alone to deal with these Seditious Rebels, they will be too hard for you; let me lift up my Hand against them, the Quarrel is mine, as well as yours.

For I have whet my glittering Sword, and my Hand shall take hold on Vengeance; and I will abate their Pride, assuage their Envy, discover their Design, and overthrow their Devices.

That all the Earth may know, that I hate, and abhor all Pretences to Religion, that are acted, and done in Disobedience, and Rebellion, to my Commands; and contrary to the Rule, and Order of Government, that I have Established in my Church.

And at the first Blow, he made at *Corah*, and his Two Hundred and Fifty Confidents, he struck their *Censers* out of their hands, and with a flash of Fire Consumed them to Ashes.

As if the Lord had said, What have you to do to handle *Censers*; to meddle with Publick Matters of Religion, seeing ye do it in Spite, and Contempt of the Government, (Established by Law) for Strife, and Debate,
and

and in Disobedience, and Rebellion against the Governours, that I have set over you.

For in very deed, Envy at the Established Government in the Church, was the seed Plot of *Corah's Sin*, and *Dathan*, and *Abiram's Conspiracy*.

And therefore, it was high time, for God to put to his helping Hand, to Vindicate *Moses*, and *Aaron*; for they were but God's Servants, employed by him, to lead them in the right way to Happiness, and to Govern them therein, by a Sacred Platform of good and wholesome *Laws*, and *Ordinances*.

As it is written *Psal. 77. 20. Thou ledest thy People, like a Flock, by the Hand of Moses, and Aaron, (i. e.) Magistracy, and Ministry.* 'Tis true, *Christ Jesus*, is the Supream Governour, and Lord of all things in Heaven, and in Earth; but he doth not Govern in either place, by his own and immediate Power.

But by Angels, and Men, Deligated by him, to bear Rule for him, over their fellow Creatures; and from them, expects an Account of their *Stewardship*, in such their places of Trust.

The Sacred Text, is my Voucher, for this Assertion, *Prov. 8; 15, 16. By me Kings Reign, and Princes Decree Justice.*

By me, Princes Rule, and Nobles; even all the Judges of the Earth.

And elsewhere, in Psal. 78. 70, 71, 72. He chose David also, his Servant, and took him from the Sheep-fold.

From following the Ews great with Young; he brought him to feed Jacob his People, and Israel his Inheritance.

So he fed them, according to the Integrity of his Heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his Hands.

Our Church Translation of the Psalms, reads it thus, So he fed them, with a Faithful, and a true Heart, and Ruled them Prudently with all his Power.

This of the Psalmist, is an Extract of that Message, which God sent by the Prophet Nathan, to King David, 2 Sam. 7, 8, 9.

Now therefore, so shalt thou say unto my Servant David, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I took thee from the Sheep-fold, from following the Sheep, to be Ruler over my People Israel.

And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine Enemies out of thy sight; and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great Men, that are in the Earth.

Now when the Spirit of Sedition shall possess the Minds of Men, and prompt them not only to dislike, but speak Evil of such Dignities,

Dignities, and those that enjoy them ; and to assemble in Companies, to Assault their Governours, as these Men in my *Text*, did *Moses*, and *Aaron*, whom they knew God had set over them, and frequently acknowledged it.

No wonder, the *Psalmist*, in *Psalm* 119. 126. said, *It was time for God to work, when Men went about to undermine the Laws of God, to make them void.*

The *Translation* of our Church *Psalms*, reads it thus, *It is time for the Lord, to lay to thy Hand, for they have destroyed thy Law.*

When these Men in my *Text*, had gathered the Congregation together, against *Moses*, and *Aaron*, what to do ? Why to cut them off, and Subvert the Government, both of Church and State.

It was high time for God to appear in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance upon them, and pluck of the Crown of spiritual Pride, from their haughty Heads.

Which he did, as you have heard, and so rejected their Confidences, and blasted their intended Proceedings.

4. They were of an envious Spirit, they envied the State and Dignity, which God had conferred upon *Moses*, and *Aaron*, in Constituting them, their Governours in the Church.

This ill Quality, Cooperated with the rest, to provoke them to a Commotion, and civil Discord, amongst themselves.

And that the old Serpent, had shed the Spawn of Envy, into their Spirits; the Kingly Prophet affirms it, with a sad Memento, 106. 16. 17, 18. *They envied Moses in the Camp, and Aaron, the Saint of the Lord.*

The Earth opened, and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the Congregation of Abiram.

And a Fire, was kindled in their Company; the Flame burnt up the ungodly.

By the last words in ver. 17. viz. *The Congregation of Abiram.* It is very probable, that *Abiram* had a gathered Church which some of our Modern Dissenters, call the Congregational, or Independent way of gathering Churches.

And if so, as it is very likely, then he was the first, that ever I read of, who gathered a false Church out of a true one.

And so by the Text, it is clear, that whilst *Corah*, and his Confederates were affronting *Moses*, and *Aaron* in publick, *Dathan*, and *Abiram* were at a private Meeting, in their Tents, Praying for their good Success, or waiting for a Watch word from them, when they should rush forth with Weapons, to Assault their Rulers,

For when *Moses*, gave a charge to the rest of the People to come away from their *Tents*, they came forth, and stood in their *Tent-doors*, with their Wives, and Children, with brazen faced Impudency, as if they would outface God, and all just Authority.

I did not know, till after more than Forty times reading this Ancient Record of Holy Writ, and an exact Inspection into the Design of the Seditious Party, with a diligent Observation of their pretended Holiness grounded upon false Principles.

Their gathering the Common People, like Herds of *Goats*, in a Tumultuous manner, against their Rulers, their crying them down, to get into their places.

I say, till I had diligently consulted the Record of this lamentable *History*, I did not know that *Presbiter*, and *Independency*, were of so long a standing in the World. For *Chorah*, an inferior *Levite*, contends with *Aaron*, to level the Office of an *High-Priest*, to that of a *Levite*; and flatly tells him, that he takes too much upon him, to lift up himself above them, being all of one *Tribe*, he saw no reason, there should be any difference in Dignity, and therefore he resolves to Conform no longer, but set up for himself, and have

Elders under him, of his own choosfing.

And as for *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, they defie all Superintendency, for it were they, as well as *Corah*, that told *Moses* and *Aaron*, *That they took too much upon them, to lift up themselves above them.*

They were able of themselves to give *Laws*, and *Orders*, to their Congregated *Profelites*, without their Lordly Jurisdiction; and in this State of Independency, they died Impenitently. How fitly may we apply the Words of *Solomon*, to the Former, and Latter Troubles of the Church, *Eccle. 1. 9, 10.*

The thing that hath been, is that, which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall bedone; and there is no new thing under the Sun.

Is there any thing, whereof it may be said, see this is new? It hath been of old time before us.

And whence is it, but from the Envy, and Malice of the old Serpent, who is called the Devil, and Satan? Who as our Saviour saith, *John 8. 44.*

Was a Murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the Truth. And so became an Enemy to all Government above himself, which Practice he continues still in the
World

World, by seducing the Sons of Men, into his old Principles of Disobedience.

'Tis true, indeed this old Serpent doth often renew his Shape, but never alters his ill Qualities: he often changeth his Habit, but not his Disposition, alters his name, but not his Nature. shifts places, but retains still his old Principles.

I will conclude this Branch, with the Sacred Caution of the Apostle St. Peter, 1. Eph. 3. 17, 18.

Therefore, Beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware, least ye being lead away with the Error of the Wicked, fall from your own Steadfastness.

But grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory both now, and for ever, Amen.

5. They were of a sullen, selfwill'd Spirit, nothing would please them, but what proceeded from their own Wills.

They answered Moses, as some of their Successors did the Prophet Jeremy, Chap. 19. 11. *Return ye from the Evil of your ways.* They said,

Ver. 19 There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the Imagination of his evil Heart.

Yea,

Yea, when they were in Captivity in *Babylon*, they would not be Reclaimed from their own Wills; but they made him this desperate Answer, *As for the Word, which thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken to thee, but we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth out of our own Mouth.* Jer. 44. 14.

Spiritual Wickedness, doth not only blind, but bind the Spirits of unstable Men, with strong Cords of selfwill'dness.

It is a hard thing to recover any one out of any Error, that hath laid the Reins of his own will; into the neck of his own Judgment.

Sic volo, sic fubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas,
His own Will, is the Rule he resolves to walk by, and to any other Persuasion, he is like the deaf *Adder*, that stops her Ear at the Voice of the Charmer, charm he never so wisely.

One of the forest Plagues, that God can inflict on any Man, is to leave him to his own Will, and the Councils of his own Heart, which must needs destroy him.

Some do think, that *Liberty of Conscience*, is the only way to propogate the *Gospel*, and the surest way to Enthrone Christ in the Hearts of the Sons and Daughters of Men.

And,

And, I say the contrary, and will prove, that there is no such thing in Religion, as *Liberty of Conscience*; such a *Liberty of Conscience* I mean, as for every Man to serve God after what way, and manner, pleaseth him best.

It is easier to keep Sin out of the Conscience, than to cast it out when it is in.

If that Light, which is within us, naturally (for God hath lighted up a Candle in every Mans Conscience) be darkned with Spiritual Errors, how great must that Darkness needs be?

The Devil, is the Prince of Darkness, but he can Transform himself into an Angel of Light. He is a fiery flying Serpent; and if he can but get in his Head, he will quickly winde in his whole Body,

How many Virgin Professors, have lost their Spiritual Chastity in an hour, by gadding abroad, to trim their way, by thinking to go in a cleaner Path, than the Highway of Salvation is, and so in a trice, deprived themselves of that Peace of Conscience, which they have not recovered again whilest they have lived.

O take heed, then of being Humorsom, and Selfwill'd under your Profession of Religion, and Pray, that the Lord will not leave

leave you to your own Wills, nor to the Councils of your own Hearts, nor to the Wisdom of your own Spirits, nor to the Nerves of your own Strength, nor to the Steps of your own ways, nor to the course of your own Natures, nor to the Liberty of your own Consciences, for if he should, ye are in the High-way to eternal Destruction.

F I N I S.

A
P O S T S C R I P T

To all sorts of

Dissenters

From the

Church of ENGLAND,

As it is now Established by Law.

Come, my Brethren, and Friends,
let us Reason together ; and as the
Lord of Hosts, the Lord Jesus, by
Haggai the Prophet, hath
commanded, *Consider our Ways.* Chap 1. 7.
And that, which I humbly conceive, may
be most advantageous for us all in this Af-
fair,

fair, will be by comparing our ways, wherein we walk, with those Antient Paths, wherein the Servants of God did walk in, of Old.

My Reason for this Conception, is grounded upon the Word of the Lord, by the Mouth of the Prophet *Jeremiah, Ch. 6, ver. 16.* Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the Ways; and see, and ask for the old Paths; where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find Rest for your Souls.

Now, I beseech you, my Brethren, consider that this Prophet, was not sent only to the Jews, but also to the rest of the Nations; and therefore the Words of his Prophecy belong to us, as well as to them; for when he wrote this Prophecy, he inserts his Commission, which runs thus, *Chap. 1. ver. 4, 5, 6, 7.* Then the Word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I Formed thee in the Belly, I knew thee, and before thou camest out of the Womb, I Sanctified thee, and Ordained thee a Prophet to the Nations.

Then said I, ah, Lord God, behold, I cannot speak, for I am a Child.

But the Lord said unto me, say not I am a Child, for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak.

Then

Then the Lord put forth his Hand, and touched my Mouth, and the Lord said unto me, behold, I have put my Words into thy Mouth.

See, I have this Day set thee over the Nations, and over the Kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, and to build, and to plant.

I have read the Book of this Prophet, very frequently in my daily Course of reading the Holy Scriptures, and have taken diligent notice of the Measures he took in delivering it, which I humbly conceive, to consist mainly in these Six Heads.

1. He gives them a Breviate of his Call, and Commission from God, to his Place and Office.

2. Gives them a Draught of his Charge against them, for their manifold Sins, Iniquities and Transgressions, which with grief of Heart, and with Checks bedewed with Tears, he frequently repeats.

3. A Demonstration, of God's just Judgment against them, for such their Transgressions.

4. Exhortations, and Admonitions, Tears, and Intreaties, to forsake their own evil Ways, and so prevent the Execution of those Judgments, which he Denounced against them.

5. The Way and Method he took, to persuade them there unto.

6. The

6. *The nature of the Punishment to be inflicted on them, in case they did not return, and leave their ill Courses.*

Now it is very remarkable, that before he chargeth them with any gross Polutions of the Flesh, or Prophane Debaucheries, he begins with their Faults of Spiritual Wickedness; and amongst the many Particulars these following are some.

1. He chargeth them with their unkindness, and indiscretion, in forsaking their first Love, to the first Principles of their Profession of Religion, *Chap. 2. 1. 2.* in these words,

Moreover, the Word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

Go and Cry in the Streets of Jerusalem, and say, Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the Kindness of thy Youth, the Love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the Wilderness.

But now they were no such People, they knew better things, or at leastwise, were resolved so to do, they were now for some *Novelties*, they must have Quails, to their Manna, which put the Lord to this *Expostulation, Ver. 5.*

What Iniquities, have your Fathers found in me that they are gone far from me? As if the
Lord

Lord had said, what Evil, do ye find in the *Law*, and in the *Ordinances* thereof, which I set before you, as a Rule to walk by.

2. He charges them with their Delight and Pleasure in changes. *Aarons Bells*, made no *Musick* in their Ears, except they Rung the *Changes*, *Chap. 2. 11.*

Hath a Nation changed their Gods, which are no Gods? But my People have changed their Glory, for that which doth not profit.

Except they might have Alterations and Amendments in the High-way of Salvation, agreeable to their own Humors, they resolve not to walk in them any longer.

This made the *Lord* Expostulate with them again, after this manner, *Chap. 2. 31.*

O Generations, see ye the Word of the Lord, have I been a Wilderness unto Israel? A Land of Darknes. Wherefore say my People, we are Lords, we will come no more unto thee: That is, we are our own Masters, and at our own liberty, to serve God how, and when we please; and as for the Ancient ways of God, we will know them no more, so as to walk in them any longer.

And further, at *Ver. 33.* the Prophet asketh them this Question, *Why winkest thou thy way to seek Love? Therefore, hast thou*

thou also taught the wicked ones thy Ways, (i. e.) to forsake the High-way of Salvation.

And then at *Ver. 36.* He reinforce this charge, saying *Why gaddest thou about so much, to change thy ways.*

Hence it is very remarkable, that in this 2. *Chap.* the Prophet gives the unstable *Israelites*, the reproachfull *Epithites* of *Trimmers*, *Gadders*, and *Changlings*, as the Product of discontented Spirits, that did not know when they were well, or at least-wise, would not.

And then in *Chap. 6.* he follows his Charge and Reproves them.

1. For a stubborn Refusal, to walk in the Antient ways of the Church.

2. For Revolting from them, by a perpetual Backsliding. *Ver. 28.*

3. For being no better than *Reprobate Silver.*

And in *Chap. 18,* He calls upon them to *Return from the Evil of their own new Ways*, to walk in the Antient and true ways of God, from which they were (without any just Cause) ungratfully, and unkindly departed. But instead of hearkning to him, they gave him this resolute Answer. at *ver. 12,* *There is no Hope, but we will walk after our own Devices, and we will everyone do the*
Imagina

Imaginations of his own Heart. To which dreadful Answer of theirs, the Prophet makes this lamentable Reply, *ver. 13.*

Therefore, thus saith the Lord, Ask ye now amongst the Heathen, who hath heard such things; the Virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing. And again, at ver. 15. he pronounceth a dreadful Sentence against them, in the Name of the Lord, in this Form of Words.

Because my People have forgotten me, and have burnt Incense to Vanity; and they have caused them to stumble in their ways, from the Antient Paths, to walk in Paths, in a way not cast up.

I must confess, I have had great searching of Heart, what the meaning of the Peoples words might be, in the first Part of their Answer, (*viz.*) *There is no Hope.* Certainly it could not be, *There is no Hope of Salvation.* For the close of their Answer imports the contrary; for they said, *We will walk after our own Devices, and we will every one do the Imaginations of his own Heart.* It seems by this Answer, that they did intend to serve God, some way or other, but it must be in such a way as pleased them, and in no other way did they intend to walk.

So that I understand by these Words of theirs, *There is no hope*, they mean that the Prophet had no hope of Reclaiming them from following their own ways, that he might as well hold his Peace and say nothing, as to persuade them to return from their new Practice, that they had taken up, to Repair to the Antient ways of God; and so eager and so earnest, and so intent and resolute were they to make good their seditious Words, that they were making ready to run a way from him, and get out of the hearing of him; and this is clear, if we consider the words of the Prophet, in Chap. 2. 25. His Words *There, are these, With hold thy Foot from being unshod, and thy Throat from thirst; but thou saidst, there is no Hope, no, for I have loved Strangers, and after them will I go.*

They were putting off their Shooes, to run in their Vamps, with more speed and hast to get out of his sight and hearing; and such a thirsty desire had they after strange *Novelties* that they could not stay so long with the Prophet as to give him the hearing of what it was, that he had further to say to them: For he would willingly have *Reasoned* with them, but they were in such hast, that they would not stay

stay to hear the sound of his Trumpet sound a retreat to them, to return to the good old way, that they had cast behind their Backs; and at last by their frequent refusing to hear him, and the snappish answer that they gave him: He calls Heaven and Earth to bear Witness against them, in such Words as these,

Be astonish'd, O ye Heavens at this! And be horribly affraid. Chap. 2 12. And then with bitter Sighs, calls to the Earth, O! *Earth, Earth, Earth, Hear the Words of the Lord.* Chap. 22. 19. and elsewhere, Chap. 6. 17, 18, 19, 20. Where after he hath spoken these Words, *I set Watchmen over you, saying, Harken to the sound of the Trumpet.* But they said, *We will not hearken:* He then proceeds in his Appeal, to his former Evidence.

Therefore, here ye Nations. and know O Congregation, what is amongst them.

Hear O Earth, behold, I will bring Evil upon this People, even the Fruit of their thoughts; because they have not hearkned unto my Word, but Rejected it.

To what purpose cometh there to me Incense from Sheba, and the sweet Cane from a far Country: Your Offerings are not acceptable, nor your Sacrifices sweet unto me.

From whence, you may observe, if ye will, that the true God accepts of no kind of Service done to him, that hath not the stamp of his antient High-way upon it.

Enquire of all the Prophets, and you will not find one of them, that doth not sharply reprove and inveigh against all sorts of *Scismaticks*, that have forsaken the plain High-ways of Salvation, to follow the Dictates of their own Hearts, and devise to themselves, new ways of Worshipping God, and that every one of them did put the Trumpet to his Mouth, and sound a Retreat to them, to return to the High-way of Salvation, wherein God had formerly led them.

I Confess, we are under a Cloud of God's Anger, and the Rod of his displeasure is upon us, especially in our Divisions, about Sacred things; for if Unity, Peace and Concord in a Kingdom, owning Christ for our Lord and Saviour, be one of the choice Blessings that we can wish for, under Heaven, then certainly (by the rule of Contraries) Divisions, Discords and Dissentions, are one of the greatest Plagues and Curses, that can possibly fall upon such a Kingdom, and People upon Earth.

If Divisions bring Desolations to a well settled *Common-wealth*, so will Divisions in
the

the Church, at last, bring ruine and desolation to Religion, and make us worse than the *Heathen*: For a People, so divided are in the High way, to all sorts of Miseries, as Christ hath assured, and experience taught us. If any one beneath Christ, had asserted such a thing, I might have mistrusted his Prediction, but when the only begotten Son of God, who is truth it self, and therefore can not possibly lie, for he is his Fathers true and faithful Witness of all things past, present, and to come. And was not this the Voice of the Eternal Father from Heaven, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.* And is not this his saying, *A Kingdom divided against it self, cannot stand, but is brought to desolation,* that is, puts the Kingdom where such Divisions are, into the direct way of Desolation and Destruction.

Now, I say, that since the Son of God hath spoken the Word, I dare not give him the lie, by thinking that a Nation divided in it self, can possibly stand in a state of security. Therefore, did he give this Advice and Charge to his Disciples, to have Salt in themselves, and to be at Peace one with another. Certainly, it was the same thing that the Prophet *Jeremiah*

aimed at, in that Word of Advice, which with grief of Heart he gave to *Jerusalem* a little before they were carried away Captive into *Babylon*. *Chap. 6. 8.*

Be thou Instructed O Jerusalem! Lest my Soul depart from thee; lest I make thee Desolate, a Land not Inhabited.

'Tis true, that such Offences will come, but woe be to them, by whom they do come: o ye think that Christ (the Prince of Peace) will Patronize your Divisions. Will ye lay the Burthen of Spiritual Wickedness upon his Back, and by force of strange Arguments, compel him to bear another Cross? This would be one way to Crucifie him afresh, and to press him down, as a Cart is pressed with Sheaves. Are the Divisions of Christians, pleasing to God? Do ye think that Christ takes it well at your Hands, to Foment so many Divisions, as ye have crumbled your selves into, since ye have left our Church? Is the Study of Divisions, the visible mark of Christianity? Is this to do the Will of God on *Earth*, as it is done in *Heaven*? Are there any sort of *Dissinters* there? No.

The Angels were never known since the Fall, to fall out amongst themselves, either

either in *Heaven* above, or in any Service that they have been imployed in for Christ upon *Earth*. There is no Strife or Contention amongst them, they serve Christ with one Consent, and Praise him with one Voice; they all Glorifie his name in one Form of sound Words, and Perseverance in the same. Those two Servants of Christ, the Evangelical Prophet *Isaiah*, and the great Evangelist St. *John*, do both agree in their Testimonies concerning this thing. The Testimony of the Prophet, is written in *Chap. 6. 3.* And one Cried unto another. and said, *Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole Earth, is full of his Glory.* The Testimony of the Evangelist, is written in the Book of the *Revelation Chap. 4. 8.* And they Rest not Day and Night, saying, *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

You may plainly perceive by these Sacred *Records*, that there are no *Dissenters* in Heaven; that the Angels do serve Christ in Unity of Spirit, and in Uniformity of Words. So that we may easily guess, who were the first *Dissenters*, even the fallen Angels; and therefore the name of a *Dissenter*, can be no Glory to
the

the Professors of the Christian Religion.

But that the fallen Angels, were the first *Dissenters* from the way of Truth. The Blessed *Jesus*, in whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom, and Knowledge, hath put the Question out of Doubt, in his Discourse with the *Pharisees* in *John* 8. 44. Where after they had told Christ, that *Abraham*, was their Father, and that God was their Father; Christ tells them plainly, that they were Related to neither, but that they were of their Father the Devil; and the Lusts of your Father will ye do; for he was a Murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the Truth.

From these Words of our Saviour, we may understand what the Devils Sin is, for which they are Reserved in Chains of Darkness unto the Judgment of the great Day. Also

From Christ's Words here, it is evident, that the fallen Angels did know the Truth, and by their Unbelief fell from it, and of pure and upright Angels, became, unclean Spirits and Devils. For as no Man can be blamed for not abiding in a House wherein he never was, neither would Christ have blamed the

the Devils for not abiding in the Truth, if they had not known it, and been Instructed in it. Wherefore did *Christ* call *Judas*, Devil? *Have I not chosen Twelve, and one of you is a Devil?* Was it not because he knew the Truth, and Preach'd the Truth, and afterwards became an Enemy to it? and betrayed his Lord and Master, that had taught and Instructed him in it, as by his Confession, before he Hanged himself, it was too manifest.

A *Christians* Eternal Happiness, consists chiefly in two things.

A true Faith, and an Holy Life. A Judgment rightly inform'd in matters of Faith, and a Conversation rightly ordered in the Practical Duties of true Holiness.

Those Men and Women, whose Lives and Conversations are Holy, are Baptized with the Holy Ghost; and they that are truly Zealous for the Honour of God's Holy Name, are Baptized with Fire; so that to be Holy in our Lives, and Zealous in our Spirits for the Glory of the Holy God, is an outward Testimony of the inward Baptism of the Holy Ghost and with Fire, precedent to which, is the Baptism of Water, the Gate of Enterance into an outward Profession of the *Gospel*.

Now

Now both these Pillars of the *Christian Religion*, are apparently to be seen in the Doctrine and Prayers of our Church, to all that have not shut their Eyes against it, nor turn'd their Back upon it.

I am bold therefore to say, that the Service of God in our Church, is Holy, because it is Founded in the *Holy Scriptures*, Composed of *Precepts, Examples, or Commands*, Collected out of the *Holy Scriptures*: Therefore many of our Prayers are called by the Name of *Collests*, because they are *Collected* out of those Portions of *Holy Scripture*, that are Appointed to be Read that Day that they are used.

All the *Hymns* that we use, both at *Morning* and *Evening Prayer*, are the very Words of the *Holy Scriptures*, or clearly deduced from them.

Those that Composed it, and set it in that Sacred Order, as it is now Established by Law. Were

Dr. *Cranmer*, Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*.
 Dr. *Ridly*, Bishop of *London*.
 Dr. *Hooper*, Bishop of *Gloucester*.
 Dr. *Latimer*, Bishop of *Worcester*.
 Dr. *Thirlby*, Bishop of *Ely*.
 Dr. *Day*. Dean of *Chichester*.
 Dr. *Taylor*.

Dr,

and Dr. Cox, Almoner to King *Edward 6th*. with divers other Pious, Learned, Holy, and Faithful Men, who out of a Godly Zeal, and Sacred purpose to advance the Glory of God, the Gospel of Christ and the Salvation of Souls, Formed these Prayers for the Service of Almighty God, that his House might be called (as Christ, and the Prophets foretold) *An House of Prayer for all People* ; suitable to the State and Condition of all sorts of the Sons and Daughters of Men, High and Low, Rich and Poor, Bond and Free, Wise and Foolish, Learned and Unlearned, Saints and Sinners, and all that Profess the Gospel of Christ, may in one pure Language, and Form of sound Words, call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent, for the only Wise God, hath promised it by the Mouth of the Prophet *Zephaniab, Chap. 3. Ver 8, 9.*

Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the Day that I rise up to the Prey, for my Determination, is to gather the Nations, that I may assemble the Kingdoms, to pour upon them mine Indignation, even all my fierce Anger, for all the Earth, shall be devoured with the Fire of my Jealousy.

For

For then will I turn to the People a pure Language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one Consent,

If all *Scripture*, given by Inspiration, is profitable for Doctrine, what may we then learn from this sacred Oracle of God's Revealed Will? Why, I humbly conceive, they teach us these **Three** things.

1. That Uniformity of Prayer in the Publick Worship of God, is the best way and manner of waiting upon God

2. That such Publick Worship of God, comes nearest to the Heavenly, of any other upon Earth, and therefore most suitable to his Nature, and most agreeable to his Mind and Will.

3. That such Uniformity, is the absolute Determination of his Divine Will, and shall be the standing Rule, and Practice of his Church and People, in the midst of all their Enemies.

Those People then, that reject, despise, vilify, and reproach, with opprobrious words, and scurrilous Language, such a Form of Prayer, and such a Method of Serving God, which is Beautified, and Adorned, and Seasoned with the Salt of God's Holy Word, are one sort of *Anti-Scripturians*.

But

But tho' there be too many that do so, yet it is never the worse, for their dirty Language, no more than the Heavenly *Manna* was, because some seditious *Israelites*, gave it the scurrilous name of Light Bread. The Holy and Heavenly Angels continued feeding on that Food, which proud and haughty Men trampled under their Feet, and gave it no better Commendation than Light and Lothsom Bread. I do not therefore much admire at the contempt which some have taken up against the Prayers of our Church, when *Israel*, God's chosen People, and the Seed of *Abraham*, grew weary of Heavenly *Manna*, the Food of Angels.

But what shall we say to these things? For since the chief of the fallen Angels, in the shape of a Serpent, Poisoned our Nature with the Venome of his own Sin, no Age hath been free from some Appearances of it, among the Sons of Men, nor ever will be, till Satan be confined to the Bottomless Pit.

I am sure in the time of the Prophet *Ezekiel*, the Church was pestered with such sort of Cattle, as he calls them, *Chap.* 34. 18, 19, 20.

Seemeth

Seemeth a it small thing unto you, to have eaten up the good Pasture, but ye must tread down with your Feet the residue of your Pastures? And to have drunk of the deep Waters, but ye must foul the residue with your Feet.

As for my Flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your Feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your Feet.

Therefore thus saith the Lord God unto them, Behold, I, even I will Judge between the Fat Cattel, and between the Lean Cattel,

Because ye have thrust with Side and with Shoulder, and pusht all the Diseased with your Horns, till ye have scattered them abroad.

Therefore will I save my Flock, and they shall no more be a Prey; and I will Judge between Cattel and Cattel.

Hence it is Evident, the Lord will one Day Judge between the Holy Martyrs, that Composed the Prayers of our Church for us, and afterwards Sealed it with their Blood in Flames of Fire. Whither they did well in so doing, or whither they do wickedly, who think their Tongues their own, to vilify and scornfully reproach it, at their own Pleasure, and with out all controul, for who is Lord over them?

Come,

Come, my Brethen, be not angry with me, nor account me an Enemy, because I tell you the truth, and I will ask you a few Questions.

I. What good thing there is, that any of you ask in your *Extempore Prayers*, that we do not ask in a well-set Form of sound Words.

II. Whither there be any one Petition in the Daily Prayers of our Church, that doth contradict the least Branch of God's Revealed Will, that favours of Impiety, or that can be truly said to hinder the work of Grace in the Heart of any Sinner.

III. Whither there be any thing wanting that may make a miserable Man happy, even in this Life, if he can obtain the things he Prays for.

IV. Whither the things we pray for therein, if granted, be not of force to make the worst of Sinners to become one of the better sort of Saints upon Earth.

V. Whither there be any thing that is requisite or necessary for Soul or Body, to make our Lives comfortable here, and our Souls eternally Happy hereafter, that is omitted or left out in the Prayers of our Church.

V I. Whither the matter contained in the Book of *Common Prayer*, be not a constant acknowledgment, and Vindication of the Faith, which was once delivered to the Saints? And whither we are not Exhorted earnestly to contend for it?

V I I. Whither there be any thing that may savingly inform the Judgments of Men in matters of Faith, or enlighten the Understanding in the Mystery of Mans Salvation, or that may encourage Sinners to turn from Darkness to Light; and from the power of Satan unto God, which are not to be found in the Doctrin and Discipline of the *Church of England*.

And now I beseech you my Friends, ask your selves this one Question.

Whither it savours of Wisdom in any that profess the Name of Christ, or own themselves to be his Servants, to question the truth of his Word. Who as a Prophet hath foretold, the desolation of Kingdoms, to proceed from their Divisions.

Hath not *Moses*, that Man of God, told *Israel* of old, that God would raise them up a Prophet like to himself, and that God the Father would put words into his Mouth, and that whosoever, would not give heed thereto, God would require it

it of him? And doth not the Apostle *St. Peter*, tell us, *Acts 3*. That Christ was that Prophet, and that *whosoever would not hear him should be destroyed from amongst the People*. And hath not Christ, by virtue of his Prophetical Office told us, *That a Kingdom divided cannot stand, but is brought to desolation*.

O let us not Tempt Christ by our divisions! to try whether he will, or can save us from Desolation, contradictory to his own word.

I think therefore, and I do Appeal to the Conscience of any unbiaſſed Man, that profeſſeth the Chriſtian Faith, whether it be not better for you to return to the Highway of Salvation again then by your Diviſions to continue rambling from one by-path to another, till ye know not which way to take, and leave the Breach open for our Enemies to break in upon us, and lay our Land Deſolate.

Do ye not hear what the Son of God ſaid? *Mat. 24. 15*. *When ye therefore ſhall ſee the Abomination of Deſolation, ſtand in the Holy Place: Standing where it ought not, ſo St. Mark reads it: And hath he not told us elſewhere, that The Diviſions of a Kingdom, will bring it to Deſolation*. Shall we

then call our selves Believers, and give no credit to his Word in so weighty a concern, as the Preservation of a Kingdom from Ruin and Destruction?

May we not safely conclude from the Words of our Saviour, that Divisions and Dissentions amongst Profest Christians, is an Abomination unto the Lord? And that *Scism* is a provoking Sin. Did not Christ weep for the Divisions of *Jerusalem*? And shall we rejoyce and glory in ours?

O take heed of writing contrary to the Copy that Christ hath set you! Did God destroy the *Jerusalemites* by their Divisions? And do ye think that he will save us by ours? Surely, No: For if Jesus Christ, be the same yesterday and to day, and for ever, as certainly he is; and he is a Devil incarnate that denys it. How then can we shelter our selves for safety under the shadow of his Wings, that are at variance amongst our selves?

O take heed of entring into Judgment with Christ, or holding an Argument against any thing that he hath spoken! Are ye wiser and stronger then he is? Is not he a consuming Fire, and your selves but dry stubble? Will ye contend with him for Mastery? Can ye speak more
for

for your Divisions, then Christ hath already declared against them?

Do ye not hear what the Lord saith by the Mouth of the Prophet? I say, *Chap. 27. 4. Who would set the Briers and Thorns against me in Battle? I would go thorow them, I would burn them together.*

Did Christ ever exercise his Prophetical Office in vain? Did his Words ever fall to the Ground without effect? Did he not Prophecy that *Judas* would betray him, and *Peter* deny him? Did he not Prophecy that false *Christs* and false *Prophets* would arise, and deceive many? And are not his Sayings fulfilled? Did he not Prophecy, (with Tears running down his Sacred Checks) that *Jerusalem* would be utterly destroyed, and the manner how? For are not these his Words? *Luke 19. 43, 44. For the Days shall come upon thee, that thine Enemies shall cast a Trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side.*

And shall lay thee even with the Ground, and thy Children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one Stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy Visitation.

And were not these Prophetical Words of his, fulfilled by the Roman Souldiers?

Did he not likewise fore-tel the spoiling of the Temple, in these Words? *Mat. 24. 2,*

And Jesus said unto them, (i. e.) his Disciples) Se ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left one Stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Was not this saying of Christ, also fulfilled, and verified at the same time that *Titus Vespasianus* took the City, and the Souldiers burnt the Temple, notwithstanding, himself in Person, intreated the Souldiers to quench the Fire newly begun in the Temple, and used all means that possibly he could, to preserve it, but all to no purpose? The Prophecy of Christ must be fulfilled, and therefore it was in vain for *Titus* to endeavour the quenching of those Flames, which by a sure Word of Prophecy, were kindled and fomented by the civil Discords, Divisions and Dissentions of the Seditious *Jews*.

If God take away Peace from us, who shall hinder the breaking forth of War amongst us? If God whet the glittering Sword of War, who shall let it rust in the Sheath? If he takes away Kings from their Thrones, who shall hinder him? It was the Son of God, that put that word into *Balaam's* Mouth. *Num. 23. 19.*

God

God, is not a Man, that he should Lie; neither the Son of Man, that he should Repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? and may not we say, Hath not the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Chrst (into whose Hands, the Order, Rule and Government of all things in Heaven, and in Earth, and in the Sea, and in all places, is given by an eternal Decree of his Father) said, *That a Kingdom divided, is brought to Desolation?* And will he not make good his Word? Yea, certainly he will, There is not one jot or tittle of his Words shall fall to the Ground, till all of them are fulfilled,

Did ye never read, and consider, that word of the Lord, by the Mouth of the Prophet *Isaiah, Chap. 66, 15, 16.*

Behold, the Lord will come with Fire, and with his Chariots like a Whirl-wind, to render his Anger with Fury, and his Rebuke, with Flames of Fire.

For by Fire and by his Sword, will the Lord plead with all Flesh: And the slain of the Lord shall be many.

The Prophet means, that all sorts of carnal Men, shall feel the smart Rod of God's Anger, when he cometh forth of his

place to punish the Inhabitants of the Earth, for their Iniquities.

Now our blessed Saviour tells us, that every Tree is known by its Fruit ; nor hath the Holy Ghost left us without a Testimony, of what the Particular Fruits of the Flesh are, whereby a Carnal Man may be discerned from one that is truly Spiritual.

The Test, is written in the Epistle of St. Paul, to the Galatians. Cap. 5. 19, 20, 21.

Now the works of the Flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Lasciviousneſs.

Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies.

Envyings, Murders, Drunkenneſs, Revellings, and ſuch like ; of the which I tell you before, as I have told you in time paſt, that they which do ſuch things, ſhall not Inherit the Kingdom of God.

But the Fruit of the Spirit, is, Love, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs, Faith.

Meekneſs, Temperance, againſt ſuch there is no Law.

Hence we are inform'd that Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, and Murders, are works of

of the Flesh, as well as Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Drunkenness, Revellings, and the former more pernicious to the Soul, than the later. The great Physician of Souls hath put this Question out of doubt, in two several Discourses, that he had with the Scribes and Pharisees. The first in *Mat* 21. 31, 32.

Verily I say unto you, that the Publicans and the Harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you.

For John came unto you in the way of Righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the Publicans, and the Harlots believed him. And ye, when ye had seen it, Repented not afterward that ye might believe him.

And in *Chap.* 23. 15. He pronounceth a Wo against them, saying, *Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for ye compass Sea and Land to make one Proselite, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the Child of Hell then your selves.*

Ask the Apostle *St. Paul*, and he will give you a further account who is a Carnal Man. *1 Cor.* 31, 2, 3, 4.

And I, Brethren, could not speak unto you, as unto Spiritual, but as unto Carnal, even as unto Babes in Christ.

I have fed you with Milk, and not with Meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

For ye are yet Carnal; for whereas there are among you Envyng and Strife, and Divisions are ye not Carnal, and walk as Men?

For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollo; are ye not Carnal?

Consult likewise and consider what the Apostle St. James hath written to this purpose. Chap. 3. 13.

Who is a wise Man, and endued with Knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good Conversation, his Works with Meekness of Wisdom.

But if ye have bitter Envyng and Strife in your Hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

This Wisdom descendeth not from above, but is Earthly, sensual Devilish.

For where Envyng and Strife is, there is Confusion, and every evil work.

But the Wisdom that is from above, is first Pure, then Peaceable, then gentle and easie to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, (or wrangling, and the Fruit of Righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

Do

Do ye not know that the Church of God is built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, whereof *Christ Jesus* the anointed Saviour, was the corner stone? And do ye not know that all of them, have from time to time declaimed against all sorts of false Doctrine, Heresie and Scism, and declared for Unity, Peace and Concord amongst all that profess the Christian Religion? If ye have forgotten these things, be not angry with me, if I bring to your Remembrance the Testimonies of some of the Prophets, who have given their suffrage to this Assertion.

The first, is that of the Prophet *Isaiah*, Chap. 35. 8.

And an High-way shall be there, and it shall be called the way of Holiness.

Now thus much I am bold to say, in Vindication of the Publick Service of our Church, that it is not only Formally an High-Way, but really a Way of true Holiness and Righteousness, if we can but frame our Lives and Conversations thereunto, and obediently answer God in the things we pray for; without which, no one can walk in the Light of God's Countenance upon Earth, nor ever see his Face in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The

The next is the Prophet *Jeremiah. chap.*

31. 9.

I will cause them to walk by the Rivers of water, in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble. And then at ver. 21. he explains his meaning in this ver. saying, Set thee up Marks, make the high heaps, set thine Heart toward the High-Way, even the way which thou wentest; turn again, O Virgin of Israel!

It seems by these Words of this Prophet, that the People did formerly walk in the common High-way of Salvation, but now they had forsaken it, and drawn away many after them, and caused them to stumble into their ways, from the antient Paths, to walk in Paths in a way not cast up, (*i. e.*) to make a Profession of such a Religion which had neither Fence nor Bounds, nor Form nor Method, and so at last to make their Land desolate. *chap. 18. ver. 15, 16.*

I could instance the Testimonies of several other Prophets, but two such Witnesses as these two Prophets were, and such great Sufferers as they were for witnessing against the Scism that was raised against the Church of God in the time of their Prophecy, may be sufficient to convince any unbiaſt Person, that the increase and continuance of Scism in a Kingdom are ſure Harbingers to the Ruin
and

and Destruction of it : They that will not believe this, will not believe *Moses* and the Prophets ; and they that will not believe them, neither will they believe tho' one should arise from the Dead, with the Flames of Hell-Fire about him.

But haply some one or other, may ask this Question, what is the Foundation of Scism, or whence doth it arise ? Why truly the question is worth asking, and the Answer if I rightly apprehend it, may do some good to the Church of God for the time to come ; however, (under Correction) I will give my Judgment upon it, and if it can plainly appear that I am mistaken in my Judgment, I shall ingeniously confess that I am a Man, and not God, and therefore may err. The Question is, whence Scism ariseth.

I *Answer*, Scism ariseth from hence, when a Man of Knowledge and deep Understanding in the Mystery of Godliness, which he had attained unto by his constant attendance on the the publick Ministry of the Word, and Service of the Church, at length begins to grow weary of serving God in the Highway of Salvation, and to think in himself that he knows as much, or more than his own Minister can teach him, and that he can make better, and longer Prayers, than the common Prayers of the

the Church are ; he is not at rest, till he hath found out a creeping hole of Likelike at something or other, tho' it be but some harmless Ceremony ; and so having once disgusted it, he resolves to dissent the Communion of the Church, and then is at a Stand in himself what to do, or what Society of Men to associate with. just like a Man that hath variety of Business with divers Men, in several Places, and not yet resolv'd whither to go first, takes his Staff in his Hand, and at the door sets it as upright as possibly he can, and that way that his Staff falls, that way he steers his Course.

So likewise do those knowing Men, that for little or no cause forsake the publique Assemblies of our Church, set up the Staff of Conscience, and towards what Society of Men it falls, thither they trudge.

Such a Similitude as this doth that smart Prophet *Hosea* use, when he reprov'd the humorsom, and Headstrong Tribe of *Ephraim*, and the unstable Tribe of *Juda*, for their easie Compliance with new-fashion'd Altars, and making a new Covenant, and for taking new Measures of Divine Worship, and justling out that which was before established by the Law of God. Now this similitude of the Prophet is written in the 4th. Chapter of his Prophesie, Ver. 12, 13.

My People ask council of their stocks, i. e. their stock of knowledge, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms (that is, of Spiritual Whoredoms) hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God. They sacrifice upon the tops of the Mountains, and burn Incense upon the Hills, under Oaks, and Poplars, and Elms.

Thus Scism sprung up like Hemlock amongst the Backsliding Israelites, and thus it sprang up amongst the English:

Deus & dabit his quoq; suam.

The Lord in Mercy put an end to our Divisions, for they are very many, great, and very destructive; for,

A Kingdom divided cannot stand well.

A Parliament divided cannot make Laws well.

A Church divided cannot pray well.

A Clergy divided cannot all preach well.

A University divided cannot study well.

An Army divided cannot fight well.

A Fleet of Ships divided cannot sail well.

A Chamber of Aldermen divided cannot Rule well.

A House divided cannot thrive well.

A Man divided in himself doth seldom think well; and,

A Vestry divided will never do well, either to Church or Poor. So

So that by all these Experiments it is too evident that where Strife and Divisions are, there will be certainly Confusion, and every evil work will follow.

But where Unity, Peace and Concord are, there are the choicest of God's Blessings attending, yea there God commands a Blessing, even Life for evermore.

To conclude this Postscript, I do once again pray and beseech you for the Lord Jesus's sake, (who is verily, and indeed the true Prince of Peace, and the Covenant that he sealed with his precious Blood, for the present Comfort, and Eternal Happiness of the Sons and Daughters of Men, is a Covenant of Peace) that ye will return to the high way of Salvation again, and be as heretofore, good Examples to those that have not yet attained to those large Measures of Knowledge and Practice as you had, before ye left us, you have given us a grievous wound, by leaving us, and ye may give us an healing Plaster by your return to us again. What a joyful sight would it be to the choicest Members of our Church to see you take your own Places, and possesse your own Seats again !

Do ye not yet know that *Satan's* Master-piece of Malice, whereby he endeavours to work Mischief to the Church of God, is, to sow the Tare-seed of Divisions amongst them? For if he can but start a question from the unstable Heart of any one of them, that may beget a doubtful Disputation amongst them, he hath his ends; and tho' it may seem to increase Knowledge; yet if it will but make the least rent he hath as much as he looks for; he knows that there will be some Standers-by, that will blow at the Coal.

Nothing can harm the Church of Christ but the Divisions of her own Children; to avoid which, a true Believer will deny himself, and be silent in many things of Circumstance, rather than he will maintain a dispute, that may in the least be prejudicial to the Church's Peace.

Abraham had cause enough to have held a dispute with *Lot*, when their Herdsmen fell out (about what I know not) and doubtless might have had the better of it, but he will not; he had rather be silent, and so quench the Coals of Strife, than to encrease the Flame, by contention, he wisely foresaw the Mischief that was likely to follow the Strife and Contention that was begun betwixt them; so that he presently endeavours to put

out the Fire before it was too much kindled, by refusing to contend at all.

Let there be no Strife I pray thee (saith he to *Lot*) betwixt me and thee, and betwixt my Herdsmen, and thy Herdsmen, for we be Brethren.

All true Believers are the Children of faithful *Abraham*, and therefore I could wish with all my Heart that these Words were written in Characters of Gold, upon the fleshly Tables of the Hearts of all the Servants of Christ, whom the Doctrine of the Gospel hath united by Articles of a true Faith, how sweet would Peace, and how bitter would Divisions be to them?

It is a remarkable thing, and worth our notice, that all the Miseries that the subtle Serpent hath brought upon all Mankind, had its Rise and Beginning from a doubtful Disputation betwixt himself and our first Parents; and thus he began with a soft, smooth, oily Language; yea, hath God said, *Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden.*

And the Woman said unto the Serpent, *we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die.*

For

For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good, and evil; as if the Serpent had said you talk of dying, if ye eat, why surely ye shall not die. God hath kept that Secret from you, which I will reveal to you; I am an Angel of Light, I came down from Heaven, and therefore must needs know the Mind and Will of God better than you do. Ye say, that if ye eat of the Tree in the midst of the Garden, you shall die; but I tell you, that God knows, that in the very day ye eat thereof your Eyes shall be opened, your Understanding's enlightned, your Knowledge increased, and ye shall be as Gods, perfectly knowing Good and Evil. Will ye then be limited by a Law, when ye may have perfect Freedom? Will ye be tied to the Observation of an Ordinance, when ye may live above all Ordinances; will ye be such Enemies to your own Good? Will ye stand so much in your own Light? Will ye continue blind, when ye may have your Eyes open'd? 'Tis but stepping a little beyond the bounds of your usual walk, and ye shall enjoy such unspeakable Priviledges, which God never yet discover'd to you. In this doubtful Disputation did the Dragon, that old Serpent, (which is call'd the Devil, and

Satan) lay the foundation of the mystery of Iniquity; which, we may plainly perceive, was not wrought by a temptation to Carnal Infirmities, but by a crafty Delusion to Spiritual Wickedness; and if you will but consult the sacred Scriptures, as Christ hath commanded, *Joh. 5. 39.* and take diligent notice of the things ye read; ye will easily perceive that Spiritual Wickedness hath had the greatest share in those Sins that have provoked the Lord to pour forth the Vials of his Wrath upon his Church and People in all Ages of the World.

And being assured by so sacred a Testimony as the Word of God is, that the Divisions of a Kingdom do portend its Desolation, let us follow those things that make for Peace, and let us take the advice which the Apostle St. Paul gives us, *Ephes. 4. 30, 31, 32.*

Grieve not the holy spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption.

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.

And be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

And

And now once more I pray, and beseech you, that if ye have any bowels of Pity or Compassion upon your native Country, if ye do not desire to see the Kingdom wherein ye were born to be made an *Akeldama*, or Field of Blood. If ye do not desire to see your Relations and Neighbours wallow in their Blood, and sheathing their Swords in each others Breasts? that ye will return in time from the causes of it. Do ye think it will be a pleasant sight to see a Company of Bloody Soldiers forcibly entring your Houses, with drawn Swords in their Hands, with Fire in their Eyes, Death in their Looks, their Mouths full of cursed Oaths, and devillish Execrations, will the noise and lamentable screeches and outcries of your Wives and Children be pleasing to you, when ye shall see them kickt and beaten like Dogs in your presence, and otherwise barbarously us'd before your Eyes; your Houses plunder'd and spoil'd of their best Furniture; your Chambers and Chests broken up, and emptied of your choicest Treasures? Can it be any pleasure to you to see so populous, so famous, and so antient a City as *Bristol* is, on a light Flame? Your Hands bound with Cords, and your selves hall'd along the Streets like Fellons, and delivered into the

Custody of cruel and hard-hearted Men with infinite more mischievous and unknown Miseries that attend Wars, whither civil among our selves, or Foreign, by Invasion of Strangers; Are there none of you left alive in this City that can testifie what the unspeakable Miseries were which this distracted Kingdom endured in the time of that Scism that so grievously wounded, and disturbed the Peace of the Church in the Reign of that pious Prince King *Charles* the I. if there are, as doubtless there are many, ask them, and they will tell you what horrible Confusions there were, both in Church and State, and the Government of both utterly subverted, till God in Mercy restor'd them to us again, and will continue so, till the same Spirit of Faction and Scism do (for our Sins) give us another overturn.

Oh *England, England!* once the Mistress of Islands, if a true list, and number of those thy Natives, which most cruelly slew one another in thy late civil Wars, should be brought to thy view!

And if all that Christian Blood, then shed to satisfy the Factionous Humours of some Men, had been exhall'd by airy Vapours, and now shour'd down upon thy fertile Fields, and populous flourishing Towns
and

and Cities, thou wouldst see strange and prodigious Sights.

If those deep Sighs and Groans, which thousands of excellent and vertuous Ladies and Gentlewomen utter'd from their afflicted Souls, and standing with Petitions in their Hands at the doors of a company of Thieves, that called themselves Committees, praying from day to day, from week to week, and from month to month, to buy their own Estates, their lovely Cheeks bedew'd with a flux of brinish Tears from their tender Eyes.

If such things as these can be pleasing to any sort of profess Christians, surely they are void of a right Understanding; they are led, not by Reason, but by a Spirit of Madness, which hath very little sense in what it acts. Consider these things (my Brethren) in time, lest ye repent it, when it is too late.

And now lastly, I pray you, seriously to consider, that there are no greater Enemies to the service of God in our Church Assemblies, than the Apostate Church of *Rome*, consisting of Monks, Fryers, Jesuits, and Mass-Priests. Can ye then do them a greater pleasure, than to joyn with them in Hatred and Contempt of it? Did they not burn both the Book it self, and the choicest Persons of those

those that composed it, and will ye throw their Ashes into the River; they tied them to Stakes, and will ye shoot at their Hearts with bitter words?

Next unto the sacred Scriptures, (I am bold to say) that our Common-Prayer Book is the surest visible Bulwark, to keep out Popery from ever being established by Law in this Kingdom any more for ever; and will ye persevere in throwing down such a Fortification? and so let in again the Antichristian Beast of *Rome* to ruin and destroy us, and to make us and your selves an everlasting Reproach, and a perpetual shame.

O do not rob those Martyrs of that Honour vvhich they purchased at so dear a rate, for the Benefit and Good of their surviving Brethren and Friends that then vv ere, or thereafter should be made Members of the Body of Christ.

O do not disgrace their Labours by blotting and staining them vvith scurilous Language, and thereby expose the Protestant Faith to the Scorn and laughter of a cruel Adversary; for over your Shoulders do the Blood-thirsty Papists shoot at our Hearts.

O that ye vv ere vv ise, that ye vv ould consider these things, and return to the high vv ay

way of Salvation again! What joy would there be in our Churches? What loving Embraces? What mutual Society? What Gladness of Heart? What inward Comfort and Consolation to our Immortal Souls? What reviving of Spirits? How sweet would such Unity Peace and Concord, be to the whole Kingdom? How mediately-secure should we be, not only from all fears of a Foreign Invasion, but from all doubts of a Civil War amongst our selves? Then should we offer our daily Sacrifices of Praise and Thanksgiving, and call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one Shoulder, and one Consent.

Thus have I discharg'd my duty to all that profess the name of Christ in this Kingdom, wherein I was born. What the effect of it may be God knows, for I do not; I leave the issue of it to the only wise Saviour of the World, in whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, whose poor, weak, and unworthy Servant I am, and hope to persevere therein.

Dum Spiritus hos Regit ortus.

And lest any Reader should here and there meet with a word or two in this Postscript, which he may happily think hath a tang of Acerbity; I have thorowly season'd, and sweetned

sweetned it with the judgment of a Martyr'd Monarch, a Stedfast and Faithful Defender of the truly antient, Catholique, and Apostolick Faith.

Upon the Ordinance against the Common-Prayer-Book.

IT is no News to have all Innovations usher'd in with the name of Reformations in Church and State, by those, who seeking to gain Reputation with the Vulgar for their extraordinary Parts and Piety, must needs undo whatever was formerly settled never so well and wisely.

So hard can the pride of those that study Novelties, allow former times any share or degree of Wisdom or Godliness.

And because matter of Prayer and Devotion to God justly bears a great part in Religion, (being the Souls more immediate converse with the Divine Majesty) nothing could be more plausible to the People then to tell them, They served God amiss in that Point.

Hence our public Liturgy, or Forms of constant Prayers must be (not amended, in what upon free and publick advice might seem to sober Men inconvenient for matter or manner, to which I should

should easily consent, but) wholly cashiered and abolished, and after many popular Contempts offered to the Book, and those that used it according to their Consciences, and the Laws in force, it must be crucified by an Ordinance, the better to please either those Men, who gloried in their extemporary Vein and Fluency; or others, who conscious to their own formality in the use of it, thought they fully expiated their Sin of not using it aright, by laying all the blame upon it, and a total rejection of it as a dead letter, thereby to excuse the deadness of their Hearts.

As for the Matter contained in the Book, sober and learned Men have sufficiently vindicated it against the Cavils and Exceptions of those, who thought it a part of Piety to make what prophane objections they could against it, especially for Popery and Superstition; whereas no doubt the Liturgy was exactly conformed to the Doctrin of the Church of England; and this by all Reformed Churches is confessed to be most sound and Orthodox.

For the matter of using Set and Prescribed Forms, there is no doubt, but that wholesome words, being known, and fitted to Men's Understandings, are soonest received into their Hearts, and aptest to excite and carry along with them judicious and fervent Affections.

Nor do I see any reason why Christians should
be

be weary of a well-composed Liturgy, (as I hold this to be) more then of all other things, wherein the Constancy abates nothing of the Excellency and Usefulness.

I could never see any reason why any Christian should abhor, or be forbidden to use the same Forms of Prayer, since he prays to the same God, believes in the same Saviour, professeth the same Truths, reads the same Scriptures, hath the same Duties upon him, and feels the same daily wants for the most part, both inward and outward, which are common to the whole Church.

Sure we may as well before-hand know what we pray, as to whom we pray, and in what words, as to what sense; when we desire the same things, what hinders we may not use the same words? Our Appetite and Digestion too may be good when we use, as when we pray for, our daily Bread.

Some Men, I hear, are so impatient not to use in all their devotions their own Invention and Gifts, that they not only disuse (as too many) but wholly cast away and condemn the Lord's Prayer; whose great guilt is, that it is the warrant and original pattern of all set Liturgies in the Christian Church.

I ever thought that the proud Ostentation of Men's Abilities for Invention, and the vain affectations of variety for Expressions, or in Publick Prayer, or in any sacred Administrations, merits a greater brand of Sin, than that which they call Cold.

Coldness and Barrenness; nor are Men in those novelties less subject to formal and superficial tempers (as to their hearts) than in the constant Forms, where not the words, but Men's Hearts are to blame.

I make no doubt but a Man may be very formal in the most extemporary variety, and very fervently devout in the most wonted Expressions: Nor is God more a God of Variety than of Constancy: Nor are constant Forms of Prayers more likely to flat and hinder the Spirit of Prayer, and Devotion, than un-premeditated and confused variety to distract and lose it.

Wherein Men must be strangely impudent, and flatterers of themselves, not to have an infinite shame of what they so do and say, in things of so sacred a nature before God and the Church, after so ridiculous, and indeed, profane a manner.

Nor can it be expected, but that in duties of frequent performance, as Sacramental Administrations, and the like, which are still the same: Ministers must either come to use their own Forms constantly, which are not like to be so sound, or comprehensive of the nature of the duty, as Forms of Publick Composure; or else they must every time affect new Expressions, when the Subject is the same; which can hardly be presumed in any Man's greatest Sufficiencies not to want (many times) much of that compleatness, order, and gravity,
becom-

becoming those duties; which by this means are exposed at every Celebration to every Minister's private Infirmities, Indispositions, Errors, Disorders, and Defects, both for Judgment and Expression.

A serious sense of which inconvenience in the Church unavoidably following every Man's several manner of officiating, no doubt, first occasioned the Wisdom and Piety of the antient Churches, to remedy these mischiefs, by the use of constant Liturgies of Publick Composure.

The want of which I believe this Church will sufficiently feel, when the unhappy Fruits of many Men's ungoverned Ignorance, and confident defects, shall be discovered in more Errors, Schism; Disorders, and uncharitable Distractions in Religion, which are already but too many, the more is the pity.

However, if violence must needs bring in, and abett those Innovations, (that Men may not seem to have nothing to do) which Law, Reason and Religion forbids, at least to be so obtruded, as wholly to juggle out the Publick Liturgy.

Yet nothing can excuse that most unjust and partial severity of those Men, who either lately had subscribed to, used, and maintained the Service-Book, or refused to se it, cryed out of the rigour of Laws and Bishops, which suffered them not to use the Liberty of their Conscience in not using it.

That

That these Men (I say) should so suddenly change the Liturgy into a Directory, as if the Spirit needed help for invention, tho' not for Expressions, or as if matter prescribed did not as much stint and obstruct the Spirit, as if it were cloath-ed in, and confined to fit words: So slight and easie is that Legerdemain, which will serve to de-lude the Vulgar.

That further, they should use such severity as not to suffer without Penalty, any to use the Com-mon-Prayer-Book publickly, altho' their Conscien-ces bind them to it, as a duty of Piety to God, and Obedience to the Laws.

Thus I see, no Men are prone to be greater Ty-rants, and more rigorous exacters upon others to conform to their illegal novelties, than such, whose pride was formerly least disposed to the obe-dience of lawful Constitutions; and whose licen-tious humours most pretended Conscientious Li-berties; which freedom, with much regret they now allow to Me, and My Chaplains, when they may have leave to serve Me, whose Abilities, even in their extemporary way comes not short of the others, but their modesty, and learning far exceeds the most of them.

But this matter is of so popular a nature, as some Men knew it would not bear learned and so-ber Debates, lest being convinced by the evidence of Reason, as well as by Laws, they should have
been

been driven either to sin more against their knowledge, by taking away the Liturgy, or to displease some Faction of the People, by continuing the use of it.

Though I believe they have offended more considerable Men; not only for their numbers and Estates, but for their weighty and judicious piety, than those are, whose weakness or giddiness they sought to gratifie, by taking it away.

One of the greatest faults some Men found with the Common-Prayer-Book, I believe, was this, That it taught them to pray so oft for Me; to which Petitions they had not Loyalty enough to say Amen, nor yet Charity enough to forbear Reproaches, and even Cursings of Me in their own Forms, instead of praying for Me.

I wish their Repentance may be their only punishment; that seeing the mischiefs which the diffuse of Publick Liturgies hath already produced, they may restore that Credit, Use, and Reverence to them, which by the antient Churches were given to Set Forms of sound and wholsom words.

The Memory of the Just is Blessed.

Who when a King on Earth, no King beside,
That liv'd more just; That more unjustly dy'd.

F I N I S.



